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THE

WORKS

OF

The late Reverend

JAMES HERVEY, A. M.

Rector of Weston-Favell, in Northamptonshire.

VOLUME II.

CONTAINING PART OF

THERON and ASPASIO;

OR, A

SERIES of DIALOGUES and LETTERS,

UPON THE

Most *important* and *interesting* SUBJECTS.

The memorial of thine abundant kindness *shall be shewed; and men shall sing of thy* righteousness. Psal. cxlv. 7.

My mouth shall daily speak of thy righteousness *and* salvation; *for I know no end thereof.* Psal. lxxi. 13.

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M DCC LXXIX.

H11
1779
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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

Lady FRANCES SHIRLEY.

MADAM,

IF Chriſtianity was inconſiſtent with true *politeneſs*, or prejudicial to real *happineſs*, I ſhould be extremely injudicious, and inexcuſably ungrateful, in preſenting theſe eſſays to your LADYSHIP. But as the religion of JESUS is the grand ornament of our nature, and a ſource of the ſublimeſt joy, the purport of the following pages cannot be unworthy the countenance and protection of the *moſt accompliſhed* perſon. Neither can there be a wiſh more ſuitable to the obligations or the dictates of *a grateful* heart, than that you may experience what you read, and *be* what you patronize.

DID religion conſiſt in a *formal* round of external obſervances, or a *forced* ſubmiſſion to ſome rigorous auſterities, I ſhould not ſcruple

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to join with the infidel and the ſenſualiſt, to dread it in one view, and to deſpiſe it in another. You need not be informed, MADAM, that it is as much ſuperior to all ſuch *low* and *forbidden* ſingularities, as the heavens are higher than the earth. It is deſcribed by an author, who learned its theory in the regions of paradiſe, and who diſplayed its efficacy in his own moſt exemplary cōnverſation ;—it is thus deſcribed by that incomparable author ; *The kingdom of GOD is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST.*

To be reconciled to the omnipotent GOD ;—to be intereſted in the unſearchable riches of CHRIST ;—to be renewed in our hearts, and influenced in our lives, by the ſanctifying operations of the divine SPIRIT ;—this is *evangelical* righteouſneſs ; this is *genuine* religion ; this, MADAM, is the kingdom of GOD eſtabliſhed in the ſoul.—How benign and inviting is ſuch an inſtitution! How honourable and advantageous ſuch a ſtate! And from ſuch privileges, what other effects can flow, but that *peace, which paſſeth all underſtanding ?* that *joy, which is unſpeakable and glorious ?*

Is there any thing in the amuſements of the gay, and purſuits of the ambitious, of greater, of equal, of comparable value ? Is not all that wealth

wealth can purchaſe, all that grandeur can beſtow, ſomewhat like thoſe glittering bubbles, which when viewed are *emptineſs*, when graſped are *nothing?* Whereas, the comforts, the benefits, the hopes of Chriſtianity, are at once ſupremely excellent, and infinitely durable: a portion, ſuited to the dignity of a rational ſoul; large as its faculties, and immortal as its being.

ALL theſe bleſſings are centered in CHRIST; were purchaſed by CHRIST; are communicated from CHRIST.—It is for want of knowing thoſe boundleſs and everlaſting treaſures of *pardoning*, *juſtifying*, *ſaving* merit, which the LORD JESUS CHRIST poſſeſſes, and which he freely diſpenſes even to ſinners, that ſo many *unthinking* perſons are attached to ignoble objects, and beguiled by deluſory pleaſures. *Unhappy* creatures! what can they do, but catch at ſhadows, and ſtoop to trifles, while they are ignorant of the grand, the ſubſtantial, the exalted good?—It is for want of duly attending to that fulneſs of grace, and that plenteouſneſs of redemption, which dwell in our moſt adorable SAVIOUR, that ſo many *ſerious* perſons are ſtrangers to the tranquillity and ſweetneſs of religion; are ſubject to all its reſtraints, but enjoy few, if any, of its delights. *Miſtaken* zealots! how can they avoid the gloomy ſituation and the uncomfortable circumſtance, ſo long as they withdraw themſelves from

from the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and his all-chearing beams?

MAY your LADYSHIP live continually under his heavenly light and healing wings! be more fully assured of his dying love, and have brighter, still brighter manifestations of his immense perfections! By these delightful views, and by that precious faith, may your heart be transformed into his *holy*, his *amiable*, his *divine* image! Your happiness will then be just such as is wished, but far greater than can be expressed by,

MADAM,

Your most obliged, and

Most obedient humble servant,

Weston-Favell,
Jan. 6. 1755.

JAMES HERVEY.

PREFACE.

THE reader will probably expect ſome account of the enſuing work; and to gratify him in this particular, will be a real pleaſure to the author.

The beauty and excellency of the *Scriptures*; —the ruin and *depravity* of human nature;—its happy *recovery*, founded on the atonement, and effected by the SPIRIT, of CHRIST;—theſe are *ſome* of the chief points, vindicated, illuſtrated, and applied in the following ſheets.—But the *grand* article, that which makes the principal figure, is the IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS of our divine LORD; from whence ariſes our juſtification before GOD, and our title to every heavenly bleſſing: An article, which, tho' eminent for its importance, ſeems to be little underſtood, and leſs regarded; if not much miſtaken, and almoſt forgotten.

The *importance* of this great evangelical doctrine,—how worthy it is of the moſt attentive conſideration, and of univerſal acceptance,—is hinted in the ſecond dialogue. So that I need, in this place, do nothing more, than give the ſenſe of a paſſage from Witſius, which is there introduced in the notes.—"The doctrine of "juſtification," ſays that excellent author, "ſpreads itſelf thro' the whole ſyſtem of divini- "ty. As this is either ſolidly eſtabliſhed, or ſu- "perficially touched; fully ſtated, or ſlightly "dif-

" diſmiſſed; accordingly, the whole ſtructure " of religion, either riſes graceful and magnifi- " cent, ſuperior to aſſault, and beyond the pow- " er of decay; or elſe it appears diſproportion- " ate and defective, totters on its foundation, " and threatens an opprobrious fall."

The deſign is executed in the form of *dialogue;* thoſe parts only excepted, in which it was not eaſy to carry on a converſation, and aſſign to each perſon a proper degree of ſignificancy. Here, to avoid the common imputation, of bringing upon the ſtage a *mute* or a *ſhadow*,—one who fights without weapons, and ſubmits without a conteſt,—the ſcene ſhifts. Our gentlemen ſeparate; and, inſtead of converſing, enter upon an *epiſtolary* correſpondence.

The dialogue-form ſeems, on many conſiderations, a very eligible way of writing.—Hereby the author gives an air both of dignity and of modeſty to his ſentiments. *Of dignity;* by delivering them from the mouths of perſons in every reſpect ſuperior to himſelf. *Of modeſty;* becauſe we no longer conſider him in the raiſed, but invidious capacity of a teacher. Inſtead of calling us to his feet, and dictating his precepts, he gratifies our *curioſity*. He turns back a curtain, and admits us to ſome remarkable interviews, or intereſting conferences. We overhear, by a kind of innocent or imaginary ſtealth, the debates which paſs in the receſſes of privacy; which are carried on with the moſt unreſerved freedom of ſpeech, and openneſs of heart.—A circumſtance, which will *apologize* for ſome peculiarities, that might otherwiſe be inconſiſtent

ent with humility, or offensive to delicacy. Particularly, it may obviate the disgust which generally, and indeed deservedly, attends the frequent intrusion of that ambitious and usurping little monosyllable, *I*.

The *names* of the persons are prefixed, each to his respective share of the discourse; in imitation of Cicero, and for the reasons which he assigns. *Quasi enim ipsos induxi loquentes: ne* inquam *et* inquit *sæpius interponerentur. Atque id eo feci, ut tanquam præsentibus coram haberi sermo videretur* *. This method, he very justly intimates, is removed farthest from the narrative, and makes the nearest approaches to *life* and *reality*. It quite secretes the author; and, by introducing the persons themselves, renders all that passes entirely their own.—It prevents likewise the repetition of those interlocutory words, *He said, he replied*. Which, unless the speeches are very long, must frequently recur, and have no pleasing effect upon the ear. And, if the speeches are long, the spirit of conversation is lost. The associates are no longer talking; but one of them, or the author, is *lecturing*.

Tho' I have so much to say in behalf of the model, I have very little to say with regard to the *execution*,—unless it be to confess the deficiency. There is not, I am sensible, that *peculiar* air and *distinguishing* turn, which should mark and characterise each speaker. This is what the nature of finished dialogue requires, and what the author applauds in some very superior writers.

* De amicitia.

ters. But not having the ability to copy it, he has not the vanity to affect it.—Nevertheleſs, the attentive reader will, all along, perceive a difference in the *ſentiment*, if not in the language. The materials vary, even when they run into the ſame mould, and take the ſame form.—In the diction alſo there muſt be *ſome* diverſity; becauſe ſeveral of the objections are propoſed in the very words of one or two eminent writers, who have appeared on the other ſide of the queſtion. Theſe are not particularized by the mark of quotation; becauſe the man of *reading* will have no occaſion for the aſſiſtance of ſuch an index, and the man of *taſte* will probably diſcern them by the ſingularity of the ſtyle.

Some of the following pieces, it muſt be acknowledged, are of the *controverſial* kind: A ſpecies of writing, leaſt ſuſceptible of the graces which embelliſh compoſition; or rather, moſt deſtitute of the attractives which engage attention, and create delight.—Yet I have ſometimes thought, that it is not abſolutely impoſſible to make even the *ſtern* face of controverſy wear a ſmile, and to reap ſome valuable fruit from the *rugged* furrows of diſputation. Whether this is effected in the preſent work, the public muſt judge; that it has been attempted, the author may be permitted to declare.

To ſoften the aſperities of argument, *views* of *nature* are interſperſed. That, if the former ſhould carry the appearance of a rude entangled foreſt, or of a frowning gloomy receſs, there may be ſome agreeable *openings*,, and lightſome *avenues*, to admit a proſpect of the country; which

is always arrayed in charms, and never fails to pleaſe.

The author confeſſes a very peculiar fondneſs for the amiable ſcenes of creation. It is therefore not at all improbable, but his excurſions on this topic, may be of the *diffuſive* kind, and his deſcriptions ſomewhat *luxuriant*. It is hoped, however, that the benevolent reader will indulge him in this favourite foible.—If any ſhould feel the ſame prevailing paſſion for the beauties of nature, 'tis poſſible theſe perſons may be inclined, not only to *excuſe*, but to *approve* the fault; and may take part with the lover, even in oppoſition to the critic.

Farther to diverſify the piece, *ſketches* of *philoſophy* are introduced; eaſy to be underſtood, and calculated to entertain the imagination, as well as to improve the heart; more particularly, to diſplay the *wiſe* and *beneficent* deſign of Providence, in the various appearances and numberleſs productions of the material world. Neither are theſe remarks altogether foreign to the main point; but, as far as the wonders of creation may comport with the riches of grace, *ſubſerve* the general end.

As to the *choice* of my ſubjects;—ſome people have deſired to ſee an invective againſt the *faſhionable* and *predominant* vices of the age. This, I apprehend, would be like picking off the leaves, or clipping away the twigs, from ſome overgrown and noxious tree. Waving this tedious and ineffectual toil, I would rather lay the axe to the root. Let the knowledge and love of CHRIST take place in the heart, and not only

a *few* of the *branches*, but the *whole body* of sin, will fall at once.

Some would have the author insist upon the conscientious observation of the sabbath, inculcate the daily worship of GOD in the family, and urge a devout attendance on the public ordinances of religion.—But when a person is convinced of sin, and made sensible of misery; when he has *tasted the good word of GOD* *, *and seen by faith the LORD's* CHRIST †; he will want no solicitation or incitement to these means of grace, and exercises of godliness. He will have just the same disposition to them all, as the *hungry* appetite has to wholesome food, or the *new-born* babe ‡ to the milk of the breast.

Others may imagine, that I have neglected the interests of *morality*; because here is no professed attempt to delineate its duties, or enforce its practice.—Let these *persons* remember, that morality never makes such *vigorous* shoots, never produces such *generous* fruit, as when ingrafted on evangelical principles.—And if I do not crop the pink, the rose, and the carnation; if I do not gather the peach, the nectarine, and the

* Heb. vi. 5. † Luke ii. 26.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 2. This comparison is, perhaps, the most *exact* and *expressive* that words can form, or fancy conceive. Babes covet nothing but the milk of the breast. They are indifferent about all other things. Give them riches, give them honours, give them whatever you please, without this rich, delicious, balmy nutriment, they will not, they cannot be satisfied.—How finely does this illustrate, and how forcibly inculcate, what our LORD styles, *the single eye*, and *the one thing needful!* or the salutary doctrines and delightful privileges of the gospel; together with that supreme value for them, and undivided complacency in them, which are the distinguishing character of *the Christian!*

the pine-apple; and put them into my reader's hand, for his immediate enjoyment: I am endeavouring to ſow the *ſeeds*, and plant the *roots* in his garden; which, if cheriſhed by the favourable influence of heaven, will yield him, not an *occaſional*, but a *conſtant* ſupply of all.

As ſeveral texts of ſcripture come under conſideration, *criticiſms* upon the original are frequently ſubjoined; in order to clear up ſome difficulties, to rectify ſome miſtranſlations, or point out the many delicate and maſterly ſtrokes, which occur in the BIBLE.—And glad ſhould I be, extremely glad, if I might recommend and endear that invaluable book; if, as the divine REDEEMER *rideth on in the word of truth, of meekneſs, and righteouſneſs* *, this hand might ſcatter a palm-branch, or this performance might lye as a flowret, to ſtrew his way †, and ſolemnize his triumph.

In the courſe of the diſputation, I dare not ſuppoſe that I have diſcuſſed all the *arguments* which ſagacity may deviſe, or ſophiſtry urge. Perhaps, I have not removed *all* the *ſcruples*, which may awaken prejudice, or embarraſs integrity. This, however, I may venture to affirm, that I myſelf have met with no conſiderable objection, which is not either expreſsly anſwered, or virtually refuted, in theſe conferences.—And, tho' I ſhould neither ſatisfy nor ſilence the gainſayer, I ſhall think my endeavours happily employed, if they may throw light upon the *dim* apprehenſion; eſtabliſh the *wavering* faith; or comfort the *afflicted* conſcience.

If

* Pſal. xlv. 4. † Alluding to Matth. xxi. 8.

If any ſhould burleſque or ridicule theſe venerable truths, and exalted privileges, I ſhall only ſay with my divine MASTER; *O! that thou hadſt known, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace! but now they are hid*, it is evident from ſuch a procedure, *they are hid from thine eyes* ‡.—Should any, in the ſpirit of *decency* and *candor*, either ſtart new, or revive old objections, I doubt not but they will receive both a due examination and a proper reply. As theſe doctrines enter into the very *eſſence* of the goſpel, and conſtitute the *glory* of our religion, they can never want a ſucceſſion of advocates, ſo long as the ſun and moon endure.—For my own part, I muſt beg leave to retire from the liſts, and lay down the weapons of controverſy. *Virgil*'s language is my reſolution;

Diſcedam, explebo numerum, reddarque tenebris.

This declaration is made, not from any the leaſt ſuſpicion, that my tenets are *indefenſible*; but becauſe I would apprize my friends, and the friends of our common Chriſtianity, that the field is *clear* and *open* for them to advance; that I reſign to others the glorious combat; and ſhall content myſelf with wiſhing them ſucceſs in the name of the LORD.—Becauſe it becomes a perſon in my *declining* ſtate, to be more peculiarly intent upon encountering a different adverſary; who is ſure to overcome, and never allows quarter. Yet, by this *word of my teſtimony*, and *by the blood of the LAMB* †, I hope to triumph even when I fall; and to be more than conqueror, through JEHOVAH *my righteouſneſs*.

Should

‡ Luke xix. 42. † Rev. xii. 11.

Should any thing be urged, forcible enough to overthrow my arguments, or detect a miſtake in my ſentiments, the world may depend upon ſeeing a *free* and *undiſſembled* retractation. I ſhall look upon it as a duty, which I owe to my conſcience, to my readers, and to my GOD, publicly to acknowledge the error.—It is one thing to be *ſilent*; another to be *obſtinate*. As I ſhall inflexibly adhere to the firſt, I would with equal ſteadineſs renounce the laſt. Though I withdraw from the ſtrife of pens and of tongues, I ſhall take care to preſerve a mind ever acceſſible to truth, ever open to conviction; a mind infinitely more concerned for the *purity* and *proſperity* of the everlaſting goſpel, than for the prevalence of my own opinion, or the credit of my own performance.

As I have the happineſs of being a member, and the honour of being a miniſter, of the reformed *eſtabliſhed church*; I cannot but reflect, with a peculiar pleaſure, that every doctrine of note, maintained in theſe dialogues and letters, is either implied in our *liturgy*, aſſerted in our *articles*, or taught in our *homilies*.—It affords me likewiſe ſome degree of ſatisfaction to obſerve, that the moſt material of the ſentiments have been adopted by *Milton*; are incorporated into his *Paradiſe Loſt*; and add dignity to the ſublimeſt poem in the world.—To have the higheſt human authority, and the firſt genius of the nation, on a writer's ſide, is no contemptible ſupport. This muſt ſurely give a ſanction, wherever our religious *eſtabliſhment* is reverenced, or polite *literature* is held in repute. Yet even this

ſanction,

ſanction, compared with the oracle of revelation, is only like a range of ciphers, connected with the initial figure: which, were they *detached*, would be inſignificant; but, in ſuch a *ſubordination*, are conſiderable.

Perhaps it ſhould be farther acknowledged, that I have not always confined myſelf to the method of our *ſyſtematic* writers, nor followed their train of thoughts with a ſcrupulous regularity. I would conduct my fellow-creature to the ſupreme and eternal good, CHRIST JESUS. I have choſen the path which ſeemed moſt *agreeable* and *inviting*, rather than moſt beaten and frequented. If this leads, with equal certainty, to the great and deſirable end, I dare promiſe myſelf an eaſy excuſe.—However, that *method* and *order*, in the doctrinal parts of the plan, are not wholly neglected, the following ſummary of contents may ſhew.

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A river-voyage. The diverſified proſpect. Comparative happineſs. Advantages of peace. A celebration of the goſpel, and its bleſſings, in a kind of rhapſody. CHRIST's righteouſneſs applied to every caſe of diſtreſs, and every time of need.

THERON

THERON AND ASPASIO:

OR, A

SERIES

OF

DIALOGUES

DIALOGUE I.

THERON was a gentleman of fine taſte; of accurate rather than extenſive reading; and particularly charmed with the ſtudy of nature. He traced the planets in their courſes, and examined the formation of the meaneſt vegetable; not merely to gratify a *refined* curioſity, but chiefly to cultivate the *nobler* principles of religion and morality. Several diſcoveries he made, and every diſcovery he improved, to this important end,—to raiſe in his mind more exalted apprehenſions of the SUPREME BEING,—and to enlarge his affections with a *diſintereſted* benevolence, conformable, in ſome degree, to that boundleſs liberality which pervades and animates the whole creation.

ASPASIO was not without his ſhare of polite literature,

ture, and philosophical knowledge. He had taken a tour through the circle of the sciences; and, having transiently surveyed the productions of *human* learning, devoted his final attention to the *inspired* writings. These he studied with the unbiassed impartiality of a critic, yet with the reverential simplicity of a Christian. These he regarded, as the *unerring* standard of duty,—the *authentic* charter of salvation,—and the *brightest* mirror of the DEITY; affording the most satisfactory and sublime display of all the divine attributes.

Theron was somewhat warm in his temper; and would, upon occasion, make use of a little innocent raillery; not to expose his friend, but to enliven the conversation; sometimes *disguising* his real sentiments, in order to sift the subject, or discover the opinion of others.—*Aspasio* seldom indulges the humorous or satirical vein, but argues with *meekness of wisdom* *: never puts on the appearance of guile, but always speaks the dictates of his heart.

Aspasio was on a visit at *Theron*'s seat.—One evening, when some neighbouring gentlemen were just gone, and had left them alone, the conversation took the following turn:

Asp.—I would always be ready, both to acknowledge and applaud whatever is amiable in the conduct of others. The gentlemen who gave us their company at dinner, seem to be all of a *different* character: yet each, in his own way, is extremely *agreeable*.

Lysander has lively parts, and is quick at repartee; but

*———*Mitis sapientia Læli,* HOR.

is a most amiable character, and delicately drawn; but is, I think, expressed with greater strength and superior beauty by the sacred penman; *Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with* meekness of wisdom. *Jam.* iii. 13.

but he never abuſes his wit to create uneaſineſs in the honeſt heart, and fluſh the modeſt cheek with confuſion.—What ſolidity of judgment, and depth of penetration, appear in *Crito!* yet how free are his diſcourſes from the magiſterial tone, or the dictatorial ſolemnity!—*Philenor*'s taſte in the polite arts is remarkably correct; yet without the leaſt tincture of vanity, or any weak fondneſs for applauſe. He never interrupts the progreſs, or wreſts the topic of converſation, in order to ſhine in his particular province.—*Trebonius*, I find, has ſignalized his valour in ſeveral campaigns. Tho' a warrior and a traveller, he gives himſelf no overbearing or oſtentatious airs. In *Trebonius*, you ſee the brave officer, regulated by all the decency of the academic, and ſweetened with all the affability of the courtier.

No one affects a *moroſe* ſilence, or aſſumes an *immoderate* loquacity *. To ingroſs the talk, is tyrannical; to ſeal up the lips, is monkiſh. Every one, therefore, from a fund of good ſenſe, contributes his quota; and each ſpeaks, not with an ambition to *ſet off* himſelf, but from a deſire to *pleaſe* the company.

Ther. Indeed, *Aſpaſio*, I think myſelf happy in this accompliſhed ſet of acquaintance; who add all the complaiſance and politeneſs of the gentleman, to the benevolence and fidelity of the friend.

Their converſation is as innocent, as their taſte is refined.—They have a noble abhorrence of *ſlander*, and deteſt the low ungenerous artifices of *detraction*.—No *looſe jeſt* has either the ſervice of their tongue, or the ſanction of their ſmile.—Was you to be with them, even in their freeſt moments, you would hear nothing

* *Zeno* being preſent, where a perſon of this loquacious diſpoſition played himſelf off, ſaid, with an air of concern in his countenance, *That poor gentleman is ill, he has a violent flux upon him.* The company was alarmed, and the rhetorician ſtopped in his career. *Yes*, added the philoſopher, *the flux is ſo violent, that it has carried his ears into his tongue.*

nothing that ſo much as borders upon *profaneneſs*, or is in the leaſt injurious to *purity* of morals.

Aſp. There is but *one* qualification wanting, to render your friends completely valuable, and their ſocial interviews a continual bleſſing.

Ther. Pray, what is that?

Aſp. A turn for *more ſerious* conferences.—Their literary debates are beautiful ſketches of whatever is moſt curious in the ſciences, or moſt delicate in the arts. From their remarks on our national affairs, and on foreign occurrences, a perſon may almoſt form a ſyſtem of politics.—But they never touch upon any topic of *morality*; never celebrate the *ſublime perfections* of the DEITY; never illuſtrate the beauties, nor enforce the truths——

Ther. Fie upon you, *Aſpaſio*, for your unpolite hint! Who can forbear interrupting the harangue, which pleads for ſuch an outrageous violation of the *mode?* would introduce *edifying* talk into our *faſhionable* aſſemblies! How is it that you, who, in other inſtances, are a gentleman of refinement, can be ſo ſtrangely inelegant in this particular?

Aſp. For ſuch a practice, *Theron*, we have no inconſiderable precedents.—Thus *Socrates* *, the wiſeſt of the *Athenian* ſages; thus *Scipio* †, the moſt accompliſhed of the *Roman* generals, converſed.—Thus *Cicero* ‡, the prince of orators, improved his elegant retirement at the *Tuſculan* villa. And *Horace* §, the brighteſt genius in the court of *Auguſtus*, formed the moſt agreeable

* Vid. *Socratis Memorabilia*, per Xenoph.

† See *Cicero*'s dialogue *de amicitia*; in which we are informed, that it was a cuſtomary practice with *Scipio*, with his polite friend *Lælius*, and ſome of the moſt diſtinguiſhed nobility of *Rome*, to diſcourſe upon the intereſts of the republic, and the immortality of the ſoul.

‡ Vid. *Tuſcul Quæſt.*

§ Such were the interviews, of which he ſpeaks with a kind of rapture,

O noctes, cœnæque deum!

able hours of his converſation upon this very plan.

Was I to enumerate all the patrons of this, forgive me if I ſay, *more honourable* mode; the moſt illuſtrious names of antiquity would appear on the liſt.

Ther. This practice, however extolled by the philoſophic gentry of ancient times, would make a very *ſingular* figure in the preſent age.

Aſp. And ſhould not the *copy*, after which the generality of mankind write, be *ſingularly correct?* Perſons of exalted fortune are the pattern for general imitation; are the copy, in conformity to which the inferior world adjuſt their manners, and regulate their behaviour. *They*, therefore, are under the ſtrongeſt obligations, not to give a *contemptible* ſtamp to the faſhion.—Benevolence to their fellow-creatures calls loudly upon them, a concern for the public good challenges it at their hands, that *they* ſignalize themſelves by a pre-eminence in all that is excellent.

Ther. Away, away with theſe *auſtere* notions! Such a ſtrain of converſation would *damp* the gaiety of our ſpirits, and *flatten* the reliſh of ſociety. It would turn the aſſembly into a conventicle, and make it Lent all the year round.

Aſp. Can it then be an auſtere practice, to cultivate the underſtanding, and improve the heart?—Can it damp the gaiety of our ſpirits, to refine them upon the plan of the higheſt perfection?—Or, will it flatten the reliſh of ſociety, to ſecure and anticipate everlaſting delights?

Ther. Everlaſting delights, Aſpaſio!—To talk of ſuch a ſubject, would be termed in every circle of wit and gallantry, an uſurpation of the parſon's office; a *low* method of retailing by ſcraps, in the parlour, what the man in black vends by wholeſale from the pulpit.—It would infallibly mark us out for *pedants*; and, for ought I know, might expoſe us to the ſuſpicion of *enthuſiaſm*.

Aſp. Your men of wit muſt excuſe me, if I cannot

perſuade myſelf to admire either the *delicacy* of their language, or the *juſtneſs* of their opinion.

The firſt, be it ever ſo *humane* and *graceful*, I reſign to themſelves.—As for the other, I would beg leave to inquire, "Are the clergy, then, the *only* perſons, "who ſhould act the *becoming* part, and converſe like "*rational* beings? Is ſolid wiſdom, and ſacred truth, "the privilege of their order; while nothing is left "for you and me, but the play of fancy, or the luxuries of ſenſe?"

I would farther aſk the circles of gallantry, "Where "is the impropriety of interweaving the *noble* doctrines diſplayed by the preacher, with our common "diſcourſe? or, what the inconvenience of introducing the *amiable* graces, recommended by his lectures, into our ordinary practice?"

Will *ſuch* an exerciſe of our ſpeech rank us among pedants? Is *this* the badge of enthuſiaſm? A ſplendid and honourable badge truly! ſuch as muſt add weight to any cauſe, and worth to any character.

Ther. This would curb the ſprightly ſallies of *wit*, and extinguiſh that engaging glow of *good-humour* which enlivens our genteel intercourſes. Accordingly, you may obſerve, that if any *formal creature* takes upon him to mention, in polite company, a religious truth, or a text of ſcripture; the pretty chat, though ever ſo profuſely flowing, ſtagnates in an inſtant. Each voluble and facetious tongue ſeems to be ſtruck with a ſudden palſy. Every one wonders at the ſtrange man's face; and they all conclude him either *mad* or a *Methodiſt*.

Aſp. Agreeable ſtrokes of wit are by no means incompatible with uſeful converſation; unleſs we miſtake an *inſipid* vivacity or *fantaſtic* levity, for wit and facetiouſneſs.—Neither have I heard, that, among all our acts of parliament, any one has paſſed to *divorce* good-ſenſe and good-humour. Why may they not both reſide on the ſame lips, and both circulate thro' the

the ſame aſſembly?—For my own part, I would neither have our diſcourſe *foured* with auſterity, nor *evaporate* into impertinence; but unite (as a judicious ancient adviſes) the benefits of improvement, with the blandiſhments of pleaſantry *.—And as to your polite people: if they can find more muſic in the *magpie*'s voice, than in the *nightingale*'s note; I muſt own myſelf as much ſurpriſed at *their* ears, as they are at the ſtrange man's face.

Ther. With all your grey-headed authorities, I fancy you will find very few proſelytes among the profeſſors of modern refinement. *Faſhion* is, with the world, the ſtandard of morals, as well as of cloaths; and he muſt be of a very *peculiar* turn indeed, who would chuſe to be ridiculous in either.

Aſp. Rather, *Theron*, he muſt be of a very *pliant* turn, who tamely delivers up his conduct to be moulded by a faſhion, which has neither true elegance to dignify it, nor the leaſt uſefulneſs to recommend it.

And which, I beſeech you, is moſt ridiculous?—He who ſervilely imitates every *idle* faſhion, and is the very *ape* of corrupt cuſtom?—Or he who aſſerts his native liberty, and reſolutely follows where *wiſdom* and *truth* lead the way?

Ther. Would you then obtrude religious diſcourſe upon *every* company?—Conſider, *Aſpaſio*, what a *motley* figure this would make.—A wedding, and a ſermon!—quadrille, and St *Paul!*—the laſt new play, and primitive Chriſtianity!

Aſp. You know the rule, *Theron*, which is given the great MASTER of our aſſemblies; *Caſt not your pearls before ſwine* †. Some there are ſo immerſed in ſenſuality, that they can reliſh nothing, but the coarſeſt huſks of converſation. To theſe, neither offer your pearls, nor proſtitute your intimacy.

But, when perſons of a liberal education, and eleva-

* *Cum quadam illecebra ac voluptate utiles.* AUL. GEL.

† Matth. vii. 6.

ted ſentiments,—when *theſe* meet together, why ſhould not their diſcourſe be ſuitable to the eminence of their rank, and the ſuperiority of their genius? raiſed far above the level of that *trite* and *effeminate* ſtrain,—"Upon my honour, the actreſs topt her part. Heavens! how charmingly ſhe ſung! how gracefully "ſhe trod the ſtage!"

Ther. Indeed, my *Aſpaſio*, I am entirely in your way of thinking; however I have hitherto put on the maſk.—The gift of ſpeech is one great prerogative of our rational nature. And 'tis pity that ſuch a ſuperior faculty ſhould be debaſed to the meaneſt purpoſes.

Suppoſe all our ſtately veſſels, that paſs and repaſs the ocean, were to carry out nothing but tinſel, and theatrical decorations; were to import nothing but glittering baubles, and nicely-fancied toys: would ſuch a method of trading be well-judged in itſelf, or beneficial in its conſequences?—Articulate ſpeech is the inſtrument of a much nobler commerce, intended to tranſmit and diffuſe the treaſures of the mind. And will not the practice be altogether *as injudicious*, muſt not the iſſue be infinitely *more detrimental*, if this vehicle of intellectual wealth is freighted only with *pleaſing fopperies?*

Aſp. Such folly and extravagance would be hiſſed out of the *commercial* world. Why then are they admitted and cheriſhed in the *ſocial?*

Ther. Why indeed? He muſt be far more acute than your *Theron*, who can aſſign a ſingle reaſon to countenance them. To explode them, ten thouſand arguments occur.—A continual round of gay and trifling converſation *, of viſits quite modiſh, and entertainments not

* The *ſignificancy* and *importance* of ſuch converſation was ſmartly repreſented by the philoſopher; who, being aſked, how he left the company employed? made anſwer; *Some in milking the ram, others in holding the pail.*

not moral, must give an indolent turn to the mind; such as will *enervate* its powers, *indispose* it for generous action, and gradually *sap* the very foundation of virtue.—Whereas, a frequent conference on the glories of the GODHEAD, or the wonders of creation, would invigorate and ennoble the soul; would enlarge her faculties, and elevate her desires.

Asp. Did not our hearts burn within us, said the travellers at *Emmaus, while HE talked with us by the way**? Those discourses, 'tis true, were conducted with a spirit, and enforced with an energy, absolutely unequalled; yet the same happy effects would, in *some* degree, result from our friendly conferences, if they turned upon the same important points. We also should feel our hearts *warmed* with holy zeal, and *glowing* with heavenly love.

Ther. Such conferences would not only be productive of *present* advantage, but yield a renewed pleasure in the retrospect. We might *reflect*, with real complacency, on hours spent in so rational a manner. And who would not prefer the silent applause of the heart, to all those tumultuous joys, which wanton jests create, or the circling glass inspires?

Asp. One † who thoroughly knew mankind, and had tried the merits of the jovial board, very pertinently compares such flashes of mirth to the *crackling of thorns under a pot* ‡. The transient blaze of the one, and the senseless noise of the other, continue but for a moment; and then expire, *that* in smoke and darkness, *this* in spleen and melancholy.

I said, *spleen and melancholy*.—For however jauntee and alert the various methods of modish trifling may seem; whatever ease and grace they are supposed to give the conversation; sure am I, it will be afflictive, to *look back* upon interviews squandered away in very vanity;

* Luke xxiv. 32.

† King *Solomon*. ‡ Eccl. vii. 6.

vanity; and shocking, to *look forward* upon the account which we must all shortly render.—What figure will *such* an article make in the final reckoning, and at the decisive bar! "Our social hours, which might "have promoted our mutual edification, and been "subservient to our CREATOR's glory, all *lost* in "merriment and whim; or *worse than lost*, in flattery "and detraction. A *blank*, or a *blot*."

Ther. Venus, we find, has her zealous knight-errants, and *Bacchus* has professed votaries, in almost every company. And is it not truly deplorable, that the GOD of nature alone has none to assert his honour, none to celebrate his perfections? though HE is the *original* of all *beauty*, and the *parent* of all *good*.

When I have taken my morning-walk amidst dews and flowers; with the sun shedding lustre round him, and unveiling the happy landscape; how has my eye been charmed with the lovely prospect! how has my ear been ravished with the music of the grove! Methought every note was a *tribute* of harmony; and all nature seemed one *grand chorus*, swelling with the CREATOR's praise.—But how has the scene been reversed, when, leaving my rural elysium, I entered the haunts of men! where I saw faculties divine, meanly engaged in trifles; where I heard the tongue, prompt to utter, and fluent to express, every thing but its MAKER's glory.

I assure you, I have often been chagrined on this occasion; and sometimes said within myself,—"What! "shall *trifles* be regarded, and the MAJESTY of "*heaven* neglected? Shall every friend, and every visitant, receive his share of respect? and no acknow-"ledgments be paid to that exalted BEING, who is "worthy, more than worthy, of all our veneration?"

Asp. This will be still more afflictive to an ingenuous mind, if we consider, that the infinite and glorious GOD is *present* at all our interviews; vouchsafes to express his satisfaction, and acknowledges himself

magnified,

magnified, when, with admiration and love, we talk of his tranſcendent excellencies.—Nay, we are aſſured, that the LORD of all lords not only hearkens, but keeps *a book of remembrance;* and will diſtinguiſh ſuch perſons, at the day of univerſal retribution. When the looſe train of licentious talkers are driven away as the deſpicable *chaff;* theſe ſhall be ſelected for his peculiar treaſure, and numbered among the *jewels* of JEHOVAH *.

Ther. If the gentlemen who make high pretenſions to reaſon, think themſelves diſcharged from theſe doctrines of revelation, they ſhould not forget *their own* ſcriptures.—A *philoſopher* will tell them the *duty* of employing their time, as in the awful preſence, and under the immediate inſpection, of the SUPREME BEING †.—An *orator* will ſhew them the egregious *impropriety* of waſting their friendly interviews, in the fumes of drollery, or the froth of impertinence ‡.

Aſp. Who then, that is wiſe, would not habituate himſelf to a practice, which comes recommended by the voice of reaſon, and is enforced by the authority of GOD?—A practice, which will adminiſter *preſent good*,—will afford *pleaſing reviews*,—and terminate in *everlaſting honour?*

Ther.

* *Mal.* iii. 16, 17. This is a paſſage much to be obſerved. A moſt emphatical recommendation of religious diſcourſe! perhaps the moſt *emphatical* that ever was uſed, and the moſt *endearing* that can poſſibly be conceived.

† *Sic certe vivendum eſt, tanquam in conſpectu vivamus: ſic cogitandum, tanquam aliquis in pectus intimum inſpicere poſſit: et poteſt. Quid enim proſit ab homine aliquid eſſe ſecretum? Nihil Deo clauſum eſt. Intereſt animis noſtris, et cogitationibus mediis intervenit.* SENEC. epiſt. 83.

‡ *Cicero* ſays, with an air of graceful indignation; *Quaſi vero clarorum virorum aut tacitos congreſſus eſſe oporteat, aut ludicros ſermones, aut rerum colloquia leviorum.* Academ. Quæſt. lib. IV.

Ther. 'Tis ſtrange, that ſubjects which deſerve to be received as the univerſal topic, are almoſt univerſally baniſhed from our diſcourſe.—Was this cabinet enriched with a ſeries of antique *medals*, or a collection of the fineſt *gems*; my friends would naturally expect to be entertained with a ſight of thoſe rarities, and an explanation of their meaning. Why ſhould we not as naturally expect, and as conſtantly agree, to entertain each other with remarks on thoſe *admirable curioſities*, which are depoſited in the boundleſs *muſæum* * of the univerſe?

When a *general* has won ſome important victory, or an *admiral* has deſtroyed the enemy's fleet; every company reſounds with their achievements; every tongue is the trumpet of their fame. And why ſhould we not celebrate, with equal delight and ardor, that ALMIGHTY *hand*, which formed the ſtructure, and furniſhed the regions, of this ſtupendous ſyſtem?

Aſp. Eſpecially, if to his *immenſely-glorious*, we add his *ſupremely-amiable* perfections.—When the victorious commander is our moſt cordial friend; when he has profeſſed the tendereſt love, done us the moſt ſignal good, and promiſed us a perpetual enjoyment of his favours; it will be impoſſible to neglect ſuch an *illuſtrious* and *generous* perſon. His name muſt be engraven upon our hearts; muſt ſlide inſenſibly into our tongues; and be as muſic to our ears.

Is not all this true, and in the moſt ſupereminent degree, with regard to the bleſſed GOD!—Can greater *kindneſs* be exerciſed, or greater *love* be conceived, than to deliver up his own Son to torments and death, for the expiation of our ſins?—Can *benefits* more deſirable be granted, than to adopt us for his children, and

* *Muſæum*—alluding to a remarkable edifice in the city of *Oxford*, diſtinguiſhed by this name; and appropriated to the reception of curioſities, both natural and artificial; and to the Britiſh Muſæum in *London*.

and ſanctify us by his SPIRIT ?—Can *promiſes* more invaluable be made, than thoſe which inſure to us the preferments of heaven, and the riches of eternity ?

All this is atteſted, concerning the almighty MAJESTY, in the ſcriptures of truth. What a fund therefore, for pleaſing and delicate converſation, are *the ſcriptures?*

Ther. Here alſo I have the pleaſure of concurring with my *Aſpaſio :* tho' I believe he ſuſpects me to be ſomewhat wavering or defective in my veneration for the ſcriptures.

Aſp. No, *Theron :* I have a better opinion of your taſte and diſcernment, than to harbour any ſuch ſuſpicion.

Ther. The ſcriptures are certainly an inexhauſtible fund of materials for the moſt delightful and ennobling diſcourſe. When we conſider the Author of thoſe ſacred books,—that they came originally from *heaven*,—were dictated by *divine* wiſdom,—have the ſame *conſummate* excellence as the works of creation :—it is really ſurpriſing, that we are not always ſearching, by ſtudy, by meditation, or converſe, into one or other of thoſe grand volumes.

Aſp. When *Secker* preaches, or *Murray* pleads, the church is crouded, and the bar thronged. When *Spence* produces the refinements of criticiſm, or *Young* diſplays the graces of poetry ; the preſs toils, yet is ſcarce able to ſupply the demands of the public.—Are we *eager* to hear, and *impatient* to purchaſe, what proceeds from ſuch eloquent tongues, and maſterly pens ? And can we be *coldly indifferent*, when—not the moſt accompliſhed of mankind,—not the moſt exalted of creatures,—but the adorable AUTHOR of all wiſdom, ſpeaks in his revealed word ? Strange ! that our attention does not *hang* * upon the venerable accents, and our talk *dwell* upon the incomparable truths !

Ther.

* St *Luke*, in his evangelical hiſtory, uſes this beautiful image, ξκρεματο. The people *hung upon* the lips of their all-wiſe TEACHER. *Luke* xix. 48. Which implies two very

Ther. I admire, I muſt confeſs, the very *language* of the Bible. In this, methinks, I diſcern a conformity between the *book* of *nature* and the *book* of *ſcripture*.

In the book of nature, the divine TEACHER ſpeaks, not barely to our ears, but to all our ſenſes. And it is very remarkable, how he *varies* his addreſs!—Obſerve his grand and auguſt works. In theſe he uſes the ſtyle of majeſty. We may call it the true *ſublime*. It ſtrikes with awe, and tranſports the mind.—View his ordinary operations. Here he deſcends to a plainer dialect. This may be termed the *familiar* ſtyle. We comprehend it with eaſe, and attend to it with pleaſure.—In the more ornamented parts of the creation, he clothes his meaning with elegance. All is rich and brilliant. We are delighted; we are charmed. And what is this, but the *florid* ſtyle?

A variety, ſomewhat ſimilar, runs through the ſcriptures.—Would you ſee *hiſtory* in all her *ſimplicity*, and all her *force;* moſt beautifully eaſy, yet irreſiſtibly ſtriking?—See her, or rather *feel* her energy, touching the niceſt movements of the ſoul, and triumphing over our paſſions, in the inimitable narrative of *Joſeph*'s life.—The repreſentation of *Eſau*'s bitter diſtreſs *; the converſation-pieces of *Jonathan*, and his gallant friend †; the memorable journal of the diſciples going to *Emmaus* ‡; are finiſhed models of the *impaſſioned* and *affecting*.—Here is nothing ſtudied; no flights of fancy; no embelliſhments of oratory. Yet how inferior is the epiſode of *Niſus* and *Euryalus*, though worked up by the moſt maſterly hand in the world, to the undiſſembled artleſs fervency of theſe ſcriptural ſketches ||!

Are

ſtrong ideas;—an *attention* that nothing could interrupt,—and an *eagerneſs* ſcarce ever to be ſatisfied.

——*Pendetque loquentis ab ore.* VIRG.

* Gen. xxvii. 30. &c. † 1 Sam. xviii. xix. xx.

‡ Luke xxiv. 13. &c.

|| Let a perſon of true taſte peruſe, in a *critical* view, the two

Are we pleaſed with the elevation and dignity of an *heroic poem*, or the tenderneſs and perplexity of a *dramatic* performance? In the book of *Job*, they are both united, and both unequalled.—Conformably to the exacteſt rules of art, as the action advances, the incidents are more alarming, and the images more magnificent. The language glows, and the pathos ſwells; till, at laſt, the DEITY himſelf makes his entrance. He ſpeaks from the whirlwind, and ſummons the creation; ſummons heaven, and all its ſhining hoſt; the elements, and their moſt wonderful productions; to vouch for the wiſdom of his providential diſpenſations.—His word ſtrikes terror, and flaſhes conviction; decides the momentous controverſy, and cloſes the auguſt drama, with all poſſible ſolemnity and grandeur.

If we ſometimes chuſe a *plaintive* ſtrain; ſuch as ſoftens the mind, and ſooths an agreeable melancholy; are any of the ancient tragedies ſuperior, in the eloquence of mourning, to *David*'s pathetic elegy on his beloved *Jonathan* *; to his moſt paſſionate and inconſolable moan† over the lovely but unhappy *Abſalom*; or

two firſt chapters of St *Luke*. He will there find a ſeries of the moſt ſurpriſing incidents, related with the greateſt *ſimplicity*, yet with the utmoſt *majeſty*.—All which, *extremely* affecting in themſelves, are *heightened* and *illuminated*, by a judicious intermixture of the ſublimeſt pieces of poetry. For my own part, I know not how to characterize them more properly than by *Solomon*'s elegant compariſon;—*They are as gold rings ſet with the beryl, or as bright ivory overlaid with ſapphires.* Cant. v. 14.

* 2 Sam. i. 19. &c.

† 2 Sam. xviii. 33. *The king was* vehemently affected (יִרְגַּז) *and went up to the chamber, and wept: and as he went, he ſaid, O my ſon* Abſalom! *my ſon, my ſon* Abſalom! *Would to GOD I had died for thee! O* Abſalom, *my ſon, my ſon!*—Such a picture, and ſo much pathos; ſo artleſs both, and both ſo exquiſite: I muſt acknowledge, I never met with, among all the repreſentations of dignity in diſtreſs.—The king's troops

or to that melodious wo, which warbles and bleeds, in every line of *Jeremiah*'s Lamentations?

Would we be entertained with the darling ſublimity of *Homer*, or the correct majeſty of *Virgil*? with the expreſſive delicacy of *Horace*, or the rapid excurſions of *Pindar*? Behold them joined, behold them excelled, in the odes of *Moſes*, and the euchariſtic hymn of *Deborah;* in the exalted devotion of the pſalms, and the glorious enthuſiaſm of the prophets.

Aſp. Only with this difference, that the former are *tuneful triflers* *, and amuſe the fancy with empty fiction; the latter are teachers ſent from GOD, and make the ſoul *wiſe unto ſalvation.*—The Bible is not only the brighteſt ornament, but the moſt invaluable depoſitum. On a right, a practical knowledge of theſe *lively oracles*, depends the preſent comfort, and the endleſs felicity of mankind. Whatever, therefore, in ſtudy or converſation, has no connection with their divine

had gained a ſignal victory. His crown and his life were reſcued from the moſt imminent danger. Yet all the honours and all the joys of this ſucceſsful day, were ſwallowed up and loſt in the news of *Abſalom*'s death.—The news of *Abſalom*'s death ſtruck, like a dagger, the afflicted father. He ſtarts from his ſeat. He haſtens into retirement, there to pour out his ſoul in copious lamentation. But his anguiſh is too impetuous to bear a moment's reſtraint. He burſts immediately into a flood of tears; and cries as he goes, *O Abſalom*, &c.

What ſays *Mezentius*, when his ſon is ſlain? when, to ſharpen his ſorrow, the pale corpſe, the miſerable ſpectacle, is before his eyes, and within his arms! The moſt pathetic word he utters, is,

———Heu! nunc miſero mihi demum
Exilium infelix, nunc alte vulnus adactum.

How *languid* is *Virgil!* how *inexpreſſive* the prince of *Latin* poetry! compared with the royal mourner in *Iſrael!* Moſt evident, from this and many other inſtances, is the ſuperiority of the ſcriptures, in copying nature, and painting the paſſions.

* *Ludit amabiliter.*

divine contents, may be reckoned among the *toys* of literature, or the *ciphers* of diſcourſe.

Ther. Here again the book of ſcripture is ſomewhat like the magazine of nature. What can we deſire for our *accommodation* and *delight*, which this ſtore-houſe of conveniencies does not afford? What can we wiſh for our *edification* and *improvement*, which that fund of knowledge does not ſupply? Of theſe we may truly affirm, each, in its reſpective kind, *is profitable unto all things*.

Are we admirers of *antiquity?*—Here we are led back, beyond the univerſal deluge, and far beyond the date of any other annals.—We are introduced among the earlieſt inhabitants of the earth. We take a view of mankind in their undiſguiſed primitive plainneſs, when the days of their life were but little ſhort of a *thouſand years*.—We are brought acquainted with the original of nations; with the creation of the world; and with the birth of time itſelf.

Are we delighted with *vaſt* achievements?—Where is any thing comparable to the miracles in *Egypt*, and the wonders in the field of *Zoan?* to the memoirs of the *Iſraelites*, paſſing thro' the depths of the ſea, ſojourning amidſt the unhoſpitable deſerts, and conquering the kingdoms of *Canaan?*—Where ſhall we meet with inſtances of martial bravery, equal to the prodigious exploits of the *judges;* or the adventurous deeds of *Jeſſe*'s valiant ſon, and his matchleſs band of *worthies* * *?*—Here we behold the fundamental laws of the univerſe, ſometimes ſuſpended, ſometimes reverſed; and not only the current of *Jordan*, but the courſe of nature controlled. In ſhort, when we enter the field of ſcripture, we tread—on *enchanted*, ſhall I ſay? rather—on *conſecrated* ground; where aſtoniſhment and awe are awakened at every turn; where is all, more than all, the *marvellous* of romance †, connected with all the preciſion and ſanctity of truth.

If

* See 2 Sam. xxiii. 8. &c. 1 Chron. xi. 10. &c.

† ——*Heroum fabula veris*
Vincitur hiſtoriis.

If we want *maxims* of *wiſdom*, or have a taſte for the *laconic ſtyle;* how copiouſly may our wants be ſupplied, and how delicately our taſte gratified! eſpecially in the book of *Proverbs*, *Eccleſiaſtes*, and ſome of the *minor* prophets.—Here are the moſt ſage leſſons of inſtruction, adapted to every circumſtance of life, formed upon the experience of all preceding ages, and perfected by the unerring SPIRIT of inſpiration.—Theſe delivered with ſuch remarkable conciſeneſs, that one might venture to ſay, every word is a ſentence *. At leaſt, every ſentence may be called an *apophthegm*, ſparkling with brightneſs of thought, or weighty with ſolidity of ſenſe. The whole, like a profuſion of pearls,—*each* containing, in a very ſmall compaſs, a value almoſt immenſe,—*all* heaped up (as an ingenious critic ſpeaks) with a confuſed magnificence, above the little niceties of order.

If we look for the *ſtrength* of *reaſoning*, and the *warmth* of *exhortation;* the *inſinuating arts* of genteel addreſs, or the *manly boldneſs* of impartial reproof; all the thunder of the orator, without any of his oſtentation; all the politeneſs of the courtier, without any of his flattery:—let us have recourſe to the acts of the apoſtles, and to the epiſtles of St *Paul* †. Theſe are a *ſpecimen*, or rather theſe are the *ſtandard*, of them all.

I do

* What *Cicero* ſaid of *Thucydides*, is more eminently true concerning our royal moraliſt, and his rich collection of ethics; concerning our evangelical hiſtorians, and their copious variety of facts. *Eum adeo eſſe rebus plenum refertumque, ut prope verborum numerum numero rerum æquet.*

† Another very remarkable inſtance of propriety in St *Paul*'s writings, is, that tho' *diffuſe* in the *doctrinal*, they are *conciſe* in the *preceptive* parts. On the former, it was abſolutely neceſſary to enlarge. On the latter it is always judicious to be ſhort. The celebrated rule of *Horace*,

Quicquid præcipies, eſto brevis,

was never more exactly obſerved, nor more finely exemplified, than

I do not wonder, therefore, that a taſte ſo refined, and a judgment ſo correct as *Milton*'s, ſhould diſcern higher attractives in the volume of inſpiration, than in the moſt celebrated authors of *Greece* and *Rome*:

> ——————*Yet not the more*
> *Ceaſe I to wander, where the muſes haunt,*
> *Clear ſpring, or ſhady grove, or ſunny hill,*
> *Smit with the love of ſacred ſong: but* CHIEF
> *Thee,* Sion, *and the flowery banks beneath,*
> *That waſh thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,*
> *Nightly I viſit* *.

Aſp. Another recommendation of the ſcriptures is, That they afford the moſt *awful* and moſt *amiable* manifeſtations of the GODHEAD. His glory ſhines, and his goodneſs ſmiles, in thoſe divine pages, with unparalleled luſtre.—Here we have a ſatisfactory explanation of *our own ſtate*. The origin of evil is traced: the cauſe of all our miſery diſcovered; and the remedy, the *infallible* remedy, both clearly ſhewn, and freely offered.—The merits of the bleeding *JESUS* lay a firm foundation for all our hopes; while gratitude for his dying love ſuggeſts the moſt winning incitements to every duty.—Morality, *Theron*, *your* (and let me add, *my*) admired morality, is delineated in

than by our apoſtolic author. See that noble ſtring of precepts, 1 *Theſſ.* v. 16, 17. *&c.*—See another choice collection of the ſame kind, *Rom.* xii. 9, 10. *&c.* In which the *energy* of the diction is no leſs admirable, than the *conciſeneſs* of the ſentence. Αποςυγνυντες—κολλωμενοι—πιλοςοργοι—ζεοντες—προσκαρτερουντες—διωκοντες—are ſome of the moſt *vigorous* words that language can furniſh, and form the moſt *animated* meaning that imagination can conceive.

* That is, "He ſtill was pleaſed to ſtudy the beauties of the "ancient poets; but his higheſt delight was in the ſongs of "*Sion*, in the holy ſcriptures, and in theſe he meditated day "and night." See Dr *Newton*'s edit.

in all its branches, is placed upon its proper basis, and raised to its highest elevation.—The SPIRIT of GOD is promised to enlighten the darkness of our understandings, and strengthen the imbecility of our wills. What an ample—Can you indulge me, on this favourite topic?

Ther. It is, I assure you, equally pleasing to myself. Your enlargements, therefore, need no apology.

Asp. What ample provision is made, by these blessed books, for *all* our spiritual wants! And, in this respect, how indisputable is their superiority to all other compositions!

Is any one convinced of *guilt*, as provoking heaven, and ruining the soul?—Let him ask *Reason* to point out a means of reconciliation, and a refuge of safety. Reason hesitates, as she replies; "The DEITY *may*, "perhaps, accept our supplications, and grant for-"giveness."—But the scriptures leave us not to the *sad uncertainty* of conjecture. They speak the language of clear assurance. GOD *has* set forth a propitiation *: He *does* forgive our iniquities †: He *will* remember our sins no more ‡.

Are we *assaulted* by temptation, or *averse* to duty?—*Philosophy* may attempt to parry the thrust, or to stir up the reluctant mind, by disclosing the *deformity* of vice, and urging the *fitness* of things. Feeble expedients! Just as well calculated to accomplish the ends proposed, as the flimsy fortification of a cobweb to defend us from the ball of a cannon; or, as the gentle vibrations of a lady's fan to make a wind-bound navy sail.—The Bible recommends no such incompetent succours. *My grace*, says its almighty AUTHOR, *is sufficient for thee* §.—*Sin shall not have dominion over you* ‖.—The great JEHOVAH, in whom is everlasting strength, *he worketh in us both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure* ⊥.

Should

* Rom. iii. 25. † Psal. ciii. 3. ‡ Heb. viii. 12.
§ 2 Cor. xii. 9. ‖ Rom. vi. 14. ⊥ Phil. ii. 13.

Should we be visited with *sickness*, or overtaken by any *calamity*, the consolation which *Plato* offers, is, That such dispensations coincide with the universal plan of divine government. *Virgil* will tell us, for our relief, That afflictive visitations are, more or less, the unavoidable lot of all men. Another *moralist* whispers in the dejected sufferer's ear, "Impatience adds to "the load; whereas a calm submission renders it more "supportable."—Does the word of revelation dispense such *spiritless* and *fugitive* cordials?—No: those sacred pages inform us, that tribulations are fatherly chastisements; tokens of our MAKER's love, and fruits of his care: that they are intended to work *in us* the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and to work out *for us* an eternal weight of glory *.

Should we, under the summons of *death*, have recourse to the most celebrated *comforters* in the Heathen world; they would increase our apprehensions, rather than mitigate our dread. Death is represented, by the great master of their schools, as "the most formidable "of all evils." They were not able *positively* to determine, whether the soul survived; and never so much as *dreamed* of the resurrection of the body.—Whereas, the book of GOD strips the monster of his horrors, or turns him into a messenger of peace; gives him an angel's face, and a deliverer's hand; ascertaining to the

* 2 Cor. iv. 17. What are *all* the *consolatory* expedients prescribed in all the volumes of Heathen morality, compared with this *one* recipe of revelation? They are, in point of cheering efficacy, somewhat like the *froth* on the conflux of a thousand rapid streams, compared with a single draught of *Homer*'s *Nepenthe*; which, he tells us, was

Temper'd with drugs of sov'reign use, t'assuage
The boiling bosom of tumultuous rage:
To clear the cloudy front of wrinkled care,
And dry the tearful sluices of despair.
Charm'd with that virtuous draught, th' exalted mind
All sense of wo delivers to the wind. Odyss. IV.

the *souls* of the righteous, an immediate *translation* into the regions of bliss; and ensuring to their *bodies*, a most advantageous *revival*, at the restoration of all things.

Inestimable book! It heals the maladies of life, and subdues the fear of death. It strikes a lightsome vista, through the gloom of the grave; and opens a charming, a glorious prospect of immortality in the heavens.

These, with many other excellencies peculiar to the scriptures, one would imagine more than sufficient to engage *every sensible* heart in their favour, and introduce them, with the *highest esteem*, into every improved conversation.—They had such an effect upon the *finest* genius, and *most accomplished* * person, that former or latter ages can boast. Insomuch, that he made, while living, this public declaration; and left it, when he died, upon everlasting record;—*How sweet are thy words*

* If we consider *David*, in the great variety of his fine qualifications;—the ornaments of his person, and the far more illustrious endowments of his mind;—the surprising revolutions in his fortune; sometimes reduced to the lowest ebb of adversity; sometimes riding upon the highest tide of prosperity;—his singular dexterity in extricating himself from difficulties, and peculiar felicity in accommodating himself to all circumstances;—the prizes he won, as a youthful champion; and the victories he gained, as an experienced general;—his masterly hand upon the harp, and his inimitable talent for poetry;—the admirable regulations of his royal government, and the incomparable usefulness of his public writings;—the depth of his repentance, and the height of his devotion;—the vigour of his faith in the divine promises, and the ardour of his love to the divine MAJESTY:—If we consider these, with several other marks of honour and grace, which ennoble the history of his life; we shall see such an *assemblage* of shining qualities, as perhaps were never united in any *other* merely human character.

This observation was expunged. But, upon maturer thoughts, it is offered to the public; in order to convince a *polite* reader, that the love of the scriptures, and the exercise of devotion, are by no means the low peculiarities of a *vulgar* mind.

words unto my taſte! yea, ſweeter than honey unto my mouth *.—*O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day* †.—*Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I may be occupied in thy precepts; and I will ſpeak of thy teſtimonies even before kings* ‡.—If *David* taſted ſo much ſweetneſs in a *ſmall*, and that the *leaſt valuable*, part of the divine word; how much richer is the feaſt to us? ſince the goſpel is added to the law, and the canon of ſcripture completed! ſince (to borrow the words of a prophet) the LORD GOD *has ſealed up the ſum;* has put the laſt hand to his work; and rendered it *full of wiſdom, and perfect in beauty* ‖.

Ther. Another very diſtinguiſhing peculiarity of the ſacred writings juſt occurs to my mind. The method of communicating advice, or adminiſtering reproof, by *parables*. A method which levels itſelf to the *loweſt* apprehenſion, without giving offence to the *moſt ſupercilious* temper; yet is as much ſuperior to plain unornamented precept, as the enlivened ſcenes of a well-wrought tragedy, are more impreſſive and affecting than a ſimple narration of the plot.

Our LORD was aſked by a ſtudent of the *Jewiſh* law, *Who is my neighbour?* which implied another queſtion, *How is he to be loved?*—The inquirer was *conceited* of himſelf; yet *ignorant* of the truth, and *deficient* in his duty. Had the wiſe INSTRUCTOR of mankind abruptly declared, *You neither know the former, nor fulfill the latter;* probably the queriſt would have reddened with indignation, and departed in a rage.—Therefore, to teach, and not diſguſt; to *convince* the man of his error, and not *exaſperate* his mind; the bleſſed *JESUS* frames a reply, as amiable in the manner, as it was pertinent to the purpoſe.

A certain perſon going down from *Jeruſalem* to *Jericho*, fell among thieves †. Not content to rob him

* Pſal. cxix. 103. † ibid. cxix. 97. ‡ ibid. cxix. 46.
‖ Ezek. xxviii. 12. † Luke x. 30. &c.

of his treaſure, they ſtrip him of his garments; wound him with great barbarity; and leave him half dead.—Soon after this calamitous accident, a traveller happens to come along that very road. And what renders him more likely to adminiſter relief, he is one of the *ſacred order*: one who taught others the lovely leſſons of humanity and charity; and was, therefore, under the ſtrongeſt obligations to exemplify them in his own practice. He juſt glances an eye upon the deplorable object; ſees him ſtretched on the cold ground, and weltering in his blood: but takes no farther notice; nay, to avoid the trouble of an inquiry, paſſes by on the other ſide.—Scarce was he departed, when a *Levite* approaches. This man *comes nearer, and looks on* the miſerable ſpectacle; takes a leiſurely and attentive ſurvey * of the caſe. And tho' every gaſh in the bleeding fleſh cried and pleaded for compaſſion, this miniſter of the ſanctuary neither ſpeaks a word to comfort, nor moves a hand to help.—Laſt comes a *Samaritan*†; one of the abhorred nation, whom the *Jew*

* This ſeems to be the import of ἐλθὼν κατ' ἀντ. *Luke* x. 32. This diverſifies the idea, and *heightens* the deſcription, of *Jewiſh* inhumanity.

† If this was a parable, we cannot but admire the accuracy of our LORD, both in *laying* the *ſcene, and ſelecting* the *circumſtances*.—It is the maxim of a great critic,

Ficta voluptatis cauſa ſint proxima veris.

And how very apparent is the air of *probability* in this ſacred apologue!—The way from Jeruſalem to Jericho, lying thro' a deſart, was much infeſted by thieves, and too commodious for their purpoſes of violence.—What could be more likely to happen, than the paſſage of a prieſt and Levite along that road? ſince Jericho was a city appropriated to the Levitical order, and contained no leſs than twelve thouſand attendants on the ſervice of the temple.

How judiciouſly is the *principal* figure circumſtanced!—Had the *calamity* befallen a *Samaritan*, it would have made but *feeble* impreſſions of pity; and thoſe, perhaps, immediately

Jew hated with the moſt implacable malignity. Tho' the *Levite* had neglected an expiring brother; tho' the prieſt had with-held his pity from one of the LORD's peculiar people; the very moment this *Samaritan* ſees the unhappy ſufferer, he melts into commiſeration. He forgets the *embittered foe*, and conſiders only the *diſtreſſed fellow-creature*. He ſprings from his horſe, and reſolves to intermit his journey. The oil and wine, intended for his own refreſhment, he freely converts into healing unguents. He binds up the wounds; ſets the diſabled ſtranger upon his own beaſt; and with all the *aſſiduity* of a *ſervant*, with all the *tenderneſs* of a *brother*, conducts him to an inn. There he depoſits money for his preſent uſe; charges the hoſt to omit nothing that might conduce to the recovery or comfort of his gueſt; and promiſes to defray

ly effaced by *ſtronger* emotions of hate. But, when it was a *Jew* that lay bleeding to death, the repreſentation was ſure to *intereſt* the hearer in the diſtreſs, and awaken a tender concern.—Had the *relief* been adminiſtered by a *Jew*, the benevolence would have ſhone, but in a much *fainter* light. Whereas, when it came from the hands of a *Samaritan*, whom all the *Jews* had agreed to execrate, and rank with the very fiends of hell, how bright—how charmingly and irreſiſtibly bright—was the luſtre of ſuch charity!

Let the reader conſider the temper expreſſed in that *rancorous* reflection; *Thou art a* Samaritan, *and haſt a devil*, John viii. 48.—Let him compare that inveterate malevolence, with the *benign* and *compaſſionate* ſpirit of our amiable traveller.—Then let him ſay, whether he ever beheld a finer or a bolder contraſt? whether, upon the whole, he ever ſaw the *ordonnance* of deſcriptive painting, more *juſtly deſigned*, or more *happily executed*?

I would beg leave to obſerve farther, that the *virulent* animoſity of the *Jew* diſcovers itſelf even in the lawyer's reply; *He that ſhewed mercy on him.* He will not ſo much as *name* the *Samaritan*; eſpecially in a caſe, where he could not be named without an honourable diſtinction.—So ſtrongly marked, and ſo exactly preſerved, are the τα ηθη, the *manners* or diſtinguiſhing qualities of each perſon, in the ſacred narrations!

fray the whole expence of his lodging, his maintenance, and his cure.

What a lively picture this of the moſt *diſintereſted* and *active* benevolence! A benevolence which excludes no perſons, not even ſtrangers or enemies, from its tender regards; which diſdains no condeſcenſion, grudges no coſt, in its labours of love. Could any method of conviction have been *more forcible*, and at the ſame time *more pleaſing*, than the interrogatory propoſed by our LORD, and deduced from the ſtory? *Which now of theſe three, thinkeſt thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?* Or can there be an advice more *ſuitable* to the occaſion, more *important* in its nature, or expreſſed with a more *ſententious* energy, than *Go thou, and do likewiſe?*—In this caſe, the learner inſtructs, the delinquent condemns, himſelf. *Bigotry* bears away its prejudice; and *Pride* (when the moral ſo ſweetly, ſo imperceptibly inſinuates) even pride itſelf lends a willing ear to admonition.

Aſp. It has been very juſtly remarked, That this *eloquence* of *ſimilitudes* is equally affecting to the wiſe and intelligible to the ignorant. It *ſhews* *, rather than *relates*, the point to be illuſtrated. It has been admired by the beſt judges in all ages; but never was carried to its *higheſt perfection*, till our LORD ſpoke the parable of the *prodigal* †: Which has a *beauty*, that no paraphraſe can heighten; a *perſpicuity*, that renders all interpretation needleſs; and a *force*, which every reader, not totally inſenſible, muſt feel.

Ther. The condeſcenſion and goodneſs of GOD are every where conſpicuous.—In the productions of nature, he conveys to us the moſt *valuable* fruits, by the intervention of the *loveliеſt* bloſſoms. Though the preſent is in itſelf extremely acceptable, he has given it an *additional endearment*, by the beauties which array it, or the perfumes which ſurround it.—In the pages,

* *Diſcentem*, ſays *Seneca* upon the ſubject, *et audientem in rem præſentem adducunt.* Epiſt. lix. † Luke xv. 11. &c.

pages of revelation likewise, he has communicated to us the most *glorious truths*; adorned with all the *graces* of *compoſition*: ſuch as may poliſh the man of genius, and improve the man of worth; ſuch as highly delight our imagination, even while they cultivate and refine our morals.—So that they really are, as one of their divine authors very elegantly ſpeaks, *like apples of gold in pictures of ſilver* *.

Aſp. Who then would not gladly receive that gracious exhortation, *Let the word of CHRIST dwell in you richly* †? Who would not willingly obey that benign command, *Thou ſhalt talk of it, when thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way; when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up* ‡?

When I conſider the *language* of the ſcriptures, and ſometimes experience their energy on my ſoul, I am inclined to ſay,—"Other writings, though poliſhed "with the niceſt touches of art, only *tinkle* on the "ear, or affect us like the ſhepherd's reed. But theſe, "even amidſt all their noble negligence, *ſtrike*—— "*alarm*—*tranſport us*—ſomewhat like the voice of "thunder, or the archangel's trumpet."

When I conſider the *contents* of the ſcriptures, and believe myſelf intereſted in the promiſes they make, and the privileges they confer, I am induced to cry out,—"What are all the other books in the world, "compared

* Prov. xxv. 11.—*Theron* follows the received tranſlation. I ſhould prefer the expoſition of *Glaſſius*; who ſuppoſes מגרות to ſignify, *Retiacula argentea, inquibus oculi ſunt minutiſſimi, penetrabiles tamen viſu.* According to this interpretation, the paſſage will preſent us with *apples of gold in* net-work, *or* lattice-work, *of ſilver*; where the fine fruit receives a new charm, by ſhewing itſelf through the elegant apertures of the ſalver.

† Col. iii. 16. *The word of CHRIST*; ſo the apoſtle calls the whole inſpired writings, and thereby aſſerts the *divinity* of his Maſter—*Dwell*; not make a ſhort ſtay, or an occaſional viſit; but take up a fixed and ſtated reſidence—*Richly*; in the largeſt meaſure, and with the greateſt efficacy; ſo as to fill the memory, ſway the will, and actuate all the affections.

‡ Deut. vi. 7.

" compared with these invaluable volumes? No more " than an *entertaining* novel, or a few *prudential* " rules for domestic œconomy, compared with a *pa-* " *rent's* will; a *royal* charter; or an *imperial* grant " of titles and manors."

All these circumstances remind me of an *encomium* most deservedly given to the BIBLE; which, though quite *artless*, is, I think, abundantly more expressive than the most elaborate efforts of rhetoric.—It came from the lips of a martyr; who, being condemned to die, for his inviolable adherence to the doctrines of scripture; when he arrived at the stake, and had composed himself for execution, took his final leave in these affecting words: " Farewell sun and moon! " farewell all the beauties of creation, and comforts " of life! farewell my honoured friends! farewell " my beloved relations! and farewell, thou *precious*, " *precious book of GOD!*"

Aspasio had scarce uttered the last sentence, when a servant came to let them know, " Supper was upon " the table."—Very opportunely, said *Theron*, has our repast waited till our conference is ended. We have shewed, what a large field of delightful speculation the scriptures open; and what ample materials for the most refined discourse * they afford. As nothing can be more ungraceful, than to *neglect* in *our own* conduct, what we *recommend* to the practice of *others;* let us, this very night, begin to ennoble our interviews with these improving subjects. Let us endeavour to make religious conversation, which is in all respects *desirable*, in some degree *fashionable*.

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* Should the serious reader want any *farther* persuasives to this most beneficial practice, he may see—how particularly our divine MASTER *observes* the strain of our conversation. Luke xxiv. 17.;—how strictly he has commanded such social communications, as may tend to the *use* of *edifying*, Eph. iv. 29.;—and what an *evidence* will arise from this article, either for our acquittal or condemnation, at the day of everlasting judgment, Matth. xii. 36. 37.

DIALOGUE II.

THE next morning, when breakfaſt was over, *Theron* and *Aſpaſio* took a walk into the garden; —their ſpirits cheared, and their imaginations lively; —gratitude glowing in their hearts, and the whole creation ſmiling around them.

The ſpot adjoining to the houſe, was appropriated to the cultivation of *flowers*. In a variety of handſome compartments, were aſſembled the choiceſt beauties of blooming nature. Here the *hyacinth* hung her ſilken bells, or the *lilies* reared their ſilver pyramids. There ſtood the neat *narciſſus*, looſely * attired in a mantle of ſnowy luſtre; or the ſplendid *ranunculus* wore a full-trimmed ſuit of radiant ſcarlet. *Pinks* were riſing to enamel the borders; *roſes* were opening to dreſs the walls; ſurrounded, on all ſides, with a profuſion of beauteous forms, either latent in the ſtalk, or burſting the buds, or blown into full expanſion.

This was bounded by a ſlight partition; a ſort of verdant parapet. Through which they deſcend by an eaſy flight of ſteps, and are preſented with the elegant ſimplicity of the *kitchen-garden*. In one place, you might ſee the marigold flowering, or the beans in bloſſom. In another, the endive curled her leaves, or the lettuce thickened her tufts: cauliflowers ſheltered their fair complexion under a green umbrella: while the burrage diſhevelled† her locks, and braided them with blooming jewels, of a finer azure than the fineſt ſapphires.—On the *ſunny ſlopes*, the cucumber and melon lay baſking in the collected beams. On the raiſed beds, the artichoke ſeemed to be erecting a ſtandard,

* ———*Hiantem flore decoro*
Narciſſum.

† Referring to the *looſe irregular* manner of its foliation.

ſtandard, while the aſparagus ſhot * into ranks of ſpears. The *level ground* produced all manner of cooling ſallads and nouriſhing eſculents. Nothing was wanting to furniſh out the wholeſome luxury of an *antediluvian* banquet.

Soon, a high wall intervenes. Through which a wicket opens, and tranſmits them into the regular and equidiſtant rows of an *orchard*.—This plantation is ſo nicely adjuſted, that it looks like an arrangement of rural piazzas, or a collection of diverſified viſtas. The eye is, every where, entertained with the exacteſt uniformity; and darts, with unobſtructed eaſe, from one end of the branching files to the other.—On all the boughs lay a lovely evolution of *bloſſoms*, arrayed in milky white, or tinged with the ſofteſt red. Crouding into one general cluſter, without relinquiſhing any vacant ſpace for leaves, they formed the faireſt, the gayeſt, the grandeſt alcove, that fancy itſelf can imagine.—It is really like the *court* of the *Graces*. None can approach it, without finding his ideas brightened, and feeling his temper exhilarated.

Contiguous to this correct diſpoſition of things, nature had thrown a *wilderneſs*, hoary, groteſque, and magnificently confuſed. It ſtretched itſelf, with a large circular ſweep, to the north; and ſecured both the olitory and the orchard from incommoding winds.—Copſes of hazel, and the flowering ſhrubs, filled the lower ſpaces; while poplars quivered aloft in air, and pines pierced the clouds with their leafy ſpears. Here grew clumps of fir, clad in everlaſting green: there ſtood groves of oak, that had weathered, for ages, the wintry ſtorm.—Amidſt this woody theatre, ran a *winding walk;* lined with elms of inſuperable height; whoſe branches, uniting at the top, reared a ſtately arch, and projected a ſolemn ſhade. It was impoſſible to

* Alluding, not only to the *ſhape*, but alſo to the *growth* of this plant; which is ſo unuſually quick, that it may almoſt be ſaid to *ſtart*, rather than to *riſe* out of the earth.

to enter this lofty labyrinth, without being ſtruck with a *pleaſing dread*. As they proceed, every inflection diffuſes a deeper gloom, and awakens a more penſive attention.

Having ſtrolled in this darkſome avenue, without a ſpeck of ſunſhine, without a glimpſe of the heavens; on a ſudden, they ſtep into open day.—Surpriſing! cries *Aſpaſio*. What a change is this! What *delightful enchantment* is here!—One inſtant, whelmed in *Trophonius*'s cave *; where horror frowns, and darkneſs lours, and ſolitude reigns: tranſported, the next, into the romantic ſcenes of *Arcadia;* where all is populous, all is lightſome, and all is gay.—Quick as thought †, the arches of heaven expand their azure. Turrets and ſpires ſhoot into the ſkies. Towns, with their ſpacious edifices, ſpread themſelves to the admiring view. Thoſe lawns, green with freſheſt herbage; thoſe fields, rich with undulating corn; where were they all, a moment ago?—It brings to my mind that remarkable ſituation of the *Jewiſh* lawgiver; when, elevated on the ſummit of *Piſgah*, he ſurveyed the goodly land of promiſe;—ſurveyed *the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter*; ſurveyed

* The reader may find a *curious* account of this cave, together with a very *humorous*, and (which ſhould always accompany humor, or elſe it will be like a ſting without the honey) an *improving* deſcription of its effects; *Spect.* vol. VIII. Nº 598, 599.

† Such a ſudden alteration of the proſpect, is beautifully deſcribed by *Milton*;

——As when a ſcout,
Through dark and deſert ways, with peril gone
All night, at laſt, by break of chearful dawn,
Obtains the brow of ſome high-climbing hill,
Which to his eye diſcovers unaware
The goodly proſpect of ſome foreign land,
Firſt ſeen; or ſome renown'd metropolis,
With gliſtering ſpires and pinnacles adorn'd,
Which now the riſing ſun gilds with his beams.

Book III.

—ſurveyed *the mountains dropping with wine, and the hills flowing with milk* * ;—ſurveyed all with thoſe eyes, which, for forty tedious years, had been confined to dry ſands, ragged rocks, and the irkſome waſtes of a deſolate howling wilderneſs.

Here they ſeated themſelves on the firſt *moſſy* † *hillock* which offered its couch. The riſing ſun had viſited the ſpot, to dry up the dews, and exhale the damps, that might endanger health; to open the violets, and expand the primroſes, that decked the green. The whole ſhade of the wood was collected *behind* them; and a beautiful, extenſive, diverſified landſcape ſpread itſelf *before* them.

Theron, according to his uſual manner, made many improving remarks on the proſpect, and its furniture. He traced the footſteps of an *all-comprehending* contrivance, and pointed out the ſtrokes of *inimitable* ſkill. He obſerved the *grand exertions* of power, and the *rich exuberance* of goodneſs, moſt ſignally, moſt charmingly conſpicuous through the whole.—Upon one circumſtance he enlarged, with a particular ſatisfaction.

Ther. See! *Aſpaſio*, how all is calculated to adminiſter the higheſt *delight* to mankind.—Thoſe trees and hedges, which ſkirt the extremities of the landſcape; ſtealing away from their real bulk, and leſſening by gentle diminutions; appear like elegant *pictures* in *miniature*. Thoſe which occupy the nearer ſituations,

* This is the language of the book of *Job*, and the prophecy of *Joel*. A language, like the ſcene it deſcribes, not beautiful only, but beautiful and rich even to *luxuriancy*, Job xx. 17. Joel iii. 18.—One would almoſt ſuſpect, the *Lyric* poet had read theſe paſſages, and attempted an imitation of their delicacies.

Vinique fontem, lactis et uberes
Cantare rivos, atque truncis
Lapſa cavis iterare mella. Lib. II. Od. xix.

† *Horace* would have called it, *ceſpes fortuitus.*

tions, are a set of noble *images;* swelling upon the eye, in *full proportion*, and in a variety of graceful attitudes. Both of them *ornamenting* the several apartments of our common abode, with a mixture of delicacy and grandeur.

The *blossoms* that array the branches, the *flowers* that embroider the mead, address and entertain *our* eyes with every charm of beauty *. Whereas, to *other* creatures, they are destitute of all those attractives, which result from a combination of the loveliest colours, and most alluring forms.—Yonder *streams*, that glide, with smooth serenity, along the valleys; glittering to the distant view, like sheets of polished crystal; or soothing the attentive ear, with the softness of aquatic murmurs; are no less *exhilarating* to the fancy, than to the soil through which they pass.—The huge enormous *mountain;* the steep and dizzy *precipice;* the pendent horrors of the craggy *promontory;* wild and tremendous as they are, furnish out an agreeable entertainment to the human mind; and *please*, even while they *terrify*. Whereas, the beasts take no other notice

* Therefore, when the prophet describes the Christian church, adorned with all the *beauties of holiness*, he borrows his imagery from these amiable objects. *Israel shall bud and blossom*, Is. xxvii. 6.—Nay, *the* very *wilderness*, even the Gentile nations, being converted unto *CHRIST*, *shall blossom as a rose*, Isa. xxxv. 1.—*I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon*, Hos. xiv. 5. What an elegant picture! and what a comfortable promise! Here is the queen of flowers, and the prince of trees. Nothing *fairer* than the full-blown lily; nothing *firmer* than the deep-rooted cedars. Yet these are a representation (and but a faint representation) of the *comeliness*, which the all-glorious REDEEMER puts upon his people; and of the *stability* which they derive from his inviolable faithfulness.

N. B. The fourteenth of *Hosea* is one of those chapters, which, for their *peculiar* importance and excellency, deserve not only to have a *turn* in our reading, but a *place* in our memory.

tice of those majestic deformities, than only to avoid the dangers they threaten.

Asp. How wonderfully do such considerations *exalt* our idea of the CREATOR's goodness; his very *distinguishing* goodness to mankind! And should they not proportionably *endear* that eternal Benefactor to our affections?—His ever-bountiful hand has scattered blessings, and with profuse liberality, among all the ranks of animated existence. But to *us* he exercises a beneficence of a very superior kind. *We* are treated as his peculiar favourites. *We* are admitted to scenes of delight, which none but ourselves are capable of relishing.

Ther. Another remark, though very obvious, is equally important. The destination of all these external things is no less *advantageous*, than their formation is *beautiful*. The bloom, which engages the eye with its delicate hues, is cherishing the *embryo-fruit;* and forming, within its silken folds, the rudiments of a *future dessert*.—Those streams, which shine from afar, like fluid silver, are much more valuable in their productions, and beneficial in their services, than they are amiable in their appearance. They distribute, as they roll along their winding banks, *cleanliness* to our houses, and *fruitfulness* to our lands. They nourish, and at their own expence, a never-failing supply of the *finest fish*. They visit our cities, and attend our wharfs, as so many *public vehicles*, ready to set out at all hours.

Those sheep, which give their udders to be drained by the busy frisking lambs, are fattening their flesh for *our support;* and while they fill their own fleeces, are providing for *our* comfortable *cloathing*. Yonder kine, some of which are browzing upon the tender herb; others, satiated with pasturage, ruminate under the shady covert; though conscious of no such design, are concocting, for our use, one of the *softest*, *purest*, *healthiest* liquors in the world.—The bees that fly humming

ming about our ſeat, and purſue their work on the fragrant bloſſoms, are collecting balm and ſweetneſs, to compoſe the richeſt of ſyrups; which, though the produce of *their toil*, is intended for *our good*.

Nature, and her whole family, are our *obſequious* ſervants, our *ever-active* labourers. They bring the fruits of their united induſtry, and pour them into our lap, or depoſit them in our ſtore-rooms.

Aſp. Who can ever ſufficiently admire this immenſe benignity?—The ſupreme DISPOSER of events has commanded delight and profit to walk hand in hand, through his ample creation; making all things ſo *perfectly pleaſing*, as if beauty was their only end; yet all things ſo *eminently ſerviceable* *, as if uſefulneſs had been their ſole deſign.—And, as a moſt winning invitation to our gratitude, he has rendered man the centre, in which all the *emanations* of his beneficence, diffuſed through this terreſtrial ſyſtem, finally *terminate*.

But, my dear *Theron*, is not this apparent, in a much more wonderful manner, throughout the whole œconomy of REDEMPTION?—It were a ſmall thing for this inferior claſs of *unintelligent* creatures, to be continually employing themſelves for our benefit. Even the *SON of the moſt high GOD*, thro' all his incarnate ſtate, acted the very ſame part.—He took fleſh, and bore the infirmities of human nature, not for himſelf, but *for us men, and our ſalvation*. He ſuffered want, and endured miſery in all its forms; that *we* might poſſeſs the fulneſs of joy, and abound in pleaſures for evermore.—When he poured out his ſoul in agonies, under the curſe of an *avenging* law; was it not with a compaſſionate view to make *us* partakers of eternal bleſſedneſs? When he fulfilled, perfectly fulfilled the whole *commanding* law; was it not for this gracious purpoſe,

* *Omnes mundi partes ita conſtitutæ ſunt, ut neque ad uſum meliores eſſe poterint, neque ad ſpeciem pulchriores.*
CIC. de nat. Deor. lib. II.

purpose, that his merits might be imputed to us? that *we*, by *his* obedience, might be made righteous? Yes;

——————*For us he liv'd,*
Toil'd for our ease, and for our safety bled.

Nothing in the whole course——

Ther. Pardon me for interrupting you, *Aspasio*. I have no objection to the general drift of your discourse. But that particular notion of *imputed righteousness* has always appeared to me in a very ridiculous light. And I must say, that such a *Puritanical nostrum* makes a very unbecoming figure, amongst your other manly and correct sentiments of religion.

Asp. You know, *Theron*, I have long ago disavowed that *ignoble* prejudice, which rejects doctrines, or despises persons, because they happen to be branded with contemptible names. 'Tis true, the writers styled *Puritans*, are remarkable for their attachment to this *peculiarity* of the gospel. It runs thro' all their theological works; and very eminently distinguishes them, from the generality of our modern treatises.—But must it *therefore* be wrong, because maintained by that particular set of people? Or, are they the *only* advocates for this important truth?

Ther. Aye: it is as I suspected. I have lately conjectured, from several hints in my *Aspasio*'s discourse, that he has been warping to the low ungentlemanlike peculiarities of those whimsical fanatics.

Asp. I cannot conceive, why you should call them *whimsical*.—To settle faith on its *proper basis*, the meritorious righteousness of the REDEEMER; and to deduce obedience from its *true origin*, the love of GOD shed abroad in the heart;—to *search* the conscience, and *convince* the judgment;—to *awaken* the lethargic, and *comfort* the afflicted soul;—and all from a thorough knowledge, joined to a masterly application, of the divine word;—these, sure, are not *whimsical* talents, but *real* excellencies. Yet these, if we may credit history, entered into the preaching; these,

if

if we will examine impartially, are to be found in the writings, of the Puritans.—And a *pearl*, you will pleaſe to remember, is a pearl ſtill, though it ſhould hang in the *Ethiopian*'s ear.

Ther. *Ethiopian* indeed! You have truly characterized that *demure* and *gloomy* generation. I hope, you don't intend to introduce their affected ſolemnity and forbidden reſerve, into your own eaſy and engaging converſation. Though, for aught I can judge, this would be no more ungraceful, than to patch ſuch *antiquated* notions on the *refined* ſcheme of Chriſtianity.

Aſp. My dear friend, you are too ludicrous; and I begin to catch the infection. We had better return to our firſt topic. Let us contemplate the wonders of creation; and as we *admire* the works, learn to *adore* the MAKER.

Ther. None of your evaſions, good *Aſpaſio*. You muſt not think to put me off at this rate. I have wanted an opportunity, to rally you upon this head; and to argue or laugh you out of theſe *religious oddities*.

Aſp. If you will not agree to terms of peace, I hope you will allow ſome ceſſation of arms. At leaſt, till I can muſter my forces, and prepare for the vindication of my principles.

Ther. No: upon the ſpot, and out of hand, you are required to anſwer for yourſelf, and theſe ſame queer opinions.—I ſhall ſerve you as the *Roman* conſul ſerved the *procraſtinating* monarch. When he demurred about his reply to the demands of the ſenate, and ſaid, *he would conſider of the matter;* the reſolute ambaſſador drew a circle round him with his cane, and inſiſted upon a poſitive anſwer, before he ſtepped over thoſe limits.

Aſp. This, however, you will give me leave to obſerve, that the affair is of a *very ſerious* nature. Upon condition that you will diſmiſs your flouriſhes of wit, and ſtrokes of ſatire, I will acquaint you with

the reasons which have made me a thorough convert to this doctrine.—Once, I held it in the utmost contempt, and pitied the simplicity of (as I then styled them) its *deluded* admirers. But I am now become *such* a fool, that I may be truly wise, and substantially happy. I have seen my ruined state, and I bless GOD for this sovereign restorative. It is the source of my strongest consolations, and the very foundation of my eternal hopes.

Ther. Excuse me, *Aspasio*, if the vivacity of my temper, and the seemingly-uncouth tenet, kindled me into a more humorous gaiety, than became the occasion. You speak of the point with so much seriousness, and in such weighty terms, as check my levity, and command my respect. Be pleased to execute what you have promised; and the most *engaged* attention of my mind shall atone for the *petulant* sallies of my tongue.

Asp. To conceive a dislike of any doctrine, only because persons of a particular denomination have been very officious to promote its reception; this is hardly consistent with an impartial inquiry after truth.

Ther. I grant it, *Aspasio*. And I should be ashamed of my opposition, if it was founded on so slight a bottom. But, abstracted from all party-considerations, I can see nothing in this supposed article of our faith, that may recommend it to the unprejudised inquirer. —What can be more *awkward* than the term, or more *irrational* than the sentiment?

Asp. The word *imputed*, when used in this connection, may possibly convey a disagreeable sound to the ears of some people: because they look upon it as the peculiar phraseology of a few *superstitious sectarists*; and reject it, merely on the foot of that unreasonable surmise.—But how can *you* be disgusted at the expression, *Theron*, who have so often read it in the most approved and judicious writers? St *Paul*, who might affirm

affirm with relation to his epiſtles, much more truly than the painter concerning his portraits, *I write for eternity* *; ſcruples not to uſe this awkward language, ſeveral times in the ſame chapter †. *Milton*, the correctneſs of whoſe taſte, and the propriety of whoſe ſtyle, no perſon of genius will ever queſtion, delights to copy, in various parts of his incomparable poem, the apoſtle's diction.—Authorized by *ſuch* precedents, it is ſuperior to cavil, and warranted beyond all exception.

As to the ſentiment, I take it to be the *very fundamental* article of the goſpel: and I believe, whoever is acquainted with eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, will allow, that it bore the *principal ſway*, in extricating us from Popiſh darkneſs, and introducing the Reformation.—What ſays our LORD, with regard to the love of GOD, and the love of our neighbour? *On theſe two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*. Much the ſame would I venture to ſay concerning the imputation of our ſins to *CHRIST*, and the imputation of *CHRIST*'s righteouſneſs to us: On *theſe two* doctrines hang all the privileges and the whole glory of the goſpel.

Ther. In our laſt converſation, I muſt own, I ſaw a ſtrong reſemblance between the works and the word of GOD. But I never obſerved any thing in nature, that bore the leaſt *analogy* to imputed ſin, or imputed righteouſneſs.—To me your two doctrines ſeem very unaccountable and irrational.

Aſp. That our ſins ſhould be charged upon the only

 begotten

* Alluding to the painter, who, apologizing for the *ſlow* procedure and ſcrupulouſly-*nice* touches of his pencil, ſaid, *Æternitati pingo, I paint for eternity.* And thoſe ſtrokes had need be correct, which are intended to ſurvive, ſo long as time itſelf ſhall laſt.

† See *Rom.* iv. in which ſingle chapter, ſome branch of the word λογίζεσθαι, *to be imputed*, occurs no leſs than ten or eleven times.

begotten SON of GOD, and that his righteousness should be made over to sinful worms, is strange, exceeding strange. The Psalmist calls it, *marvellous loving-kindness* *. The Apostle styles it, *love that passeth knowledge* †. And it has sometimes, I must freely confess, been almost ready to stagger my belief.—However, I have found myself relieved in this perplexity, not only by the *testimonies* of *scripture*, but even from the contemplation of nature. All nature is full of strange and mysterious effects; consequently, is a voucher for the mysterious truths of Christianity.

How surprising are the experiments of *electricity*, and the occult qualities of the *loadstone!* How surprising those countless legions of *effluvia*, which transpire from a small odoriferous body! and those infinite myriads of *luminous particles*, which issue from a smaller flaming substance ‡! There's not a blade of grass, but surpasses the comprehension of all mankind; and not a single atom, but is big with wonders.—Insomuch, that the *intelligent* observer can no where fix his thoughts, without being astonished, transported, and even lost in admiration.

Since the procedure of Providence in this visible system, is a continued series of stupendous and unsearchable operations; need we be alarmed, can we reasonably be offended, if the scheme of redemption is equally stupendous, is far more amazing? Yet, tho' *amazing*, I hope, it will not appear, what you was pleased to insinuate, *irrational*.

Suppose we state the signification of the *terms*, and

* Psal. xvii. 7. † Eph. iii. 19.

‡ Dr *Nieuwentyt* has computed, that, from a lighted candle, about the size of six to the pound, there issues, in the second of a minute, an effusion of particles, vastly more than ten hundred thousand million times the number of sands, which the whole globe of the earth contains.—To call this a *very great* multitude, would be saying little. It nonpluses our *thoughts*, and exceeds the utmost stretch of *imagination!*

and adjust the boundaries of our subject, before we enter upon a survey of its contents?

Ther. Such a caution would have prevented, at least have shortened, many a vehement and tedious controversy.—You see, on yonder heath, the preparations for an approaching race. There stand the *posts*, which are to mark out the limits of the course. Without this previous restrictive care, how irregular would be the excursions of the contending steeds! How *difficult*, rather how *impossible*, to declare the conqueror, and award the prize!—A clear definition of terms seems equally necessary for candid disputants. Without it, they may wrangle for ages, and never come to a determination.

Asp. Justification is an act of GOD almighty's grace; whereby he acquits his people from guilt, and accounts them righteous *, for the sake of *CHRIST*'s righteousness, which was wrought out for them, and is imputed to them.

Ther. Two of your terms want some farther explication. What do you understand by *CHRIST*'s *righteousness?* And what is the meaning of *imputed?*

Asp. By *CHRIST*'s *righteousness*, I understand the whole of his *active* and *passive* obedience; springing from the perfect holiness of his heart; continuned through the whole progress of his life; and extending to the very last pang of his death.—By the word *imputed*, I would signify, that this righteousness, though performed by our LORD, is *placed to our account;* is reckoned or adjudged by GOD as *our own*. Insomuch, that we may *plead* it, and *rely* on it, for the pardon of our sins; for adoption into his family; and for the enjoyment of life eternal.—Shall I illustrate my meaning by a well-attested fact?

Ther.

* Should any reader object to the definition, apprehending, that justification implies no more than *the pardon of sins;* I would desire him to suspend his judgment, till he has perused Dialogue X. where this point is more circumstantially considered.

Ther. Nothing gives us so easy a conception of any difficult point, as this method of explaining, by *parallel* facts, on proper similitudes.

Asp. I don't say the case is parallel. I only produce it, to aid our conceptions.—*Onesimus*, you know, was *Philemon's* slave *. He had perfidiously deserted his master's service, and still more perfidiously stole his goods. The fugitive, in his guilty rambles, providentially meets with St *Paul*. He is charmed and captivated with that gracious gospel, which proclaims mercy even for the vilest of sinners. He becomes a thorough convert to the religion of *JESUS*, and is received into the spiritual patronage of the apostle. Who, learning his dishonest conduct, and obnoxious state, undertakes to bring about a reconciliation with his offended master; dispatches him, for this purpose, with a letter to *Philemon;* and, amongst other persuasives, writes thus in the poor criminal's behalf; *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account. I Paul have written it with mine own hand; I will repay it.*

That which the zealous preacher of Christianity *offered*, the adored AUTHOR of Christianity *executed*. —*We* had revolted from the LORD of all lords, and broke his holy commandments. The SON of GOD, infinitely compassionate, vouchsafes to become our Mediator. That nothing might be wanting to render his mediation successful, he places himself in our stead. The punishment, which *we* deserved, *He* endures. The obedience, which *we* owed, *He* fulfils.— Both which, being imputed to us, and accepted for us, are the foundation of our pardon, are the procuring cause of our justification.

Ther. Is this the exact signification of the original word, which we translate *imputed?*

Asp. In the book of *Numbers*, we meet with this phrase; and in such a connection, as clears up its meaning.

* See the epistle to *Philemon.*

meaning. JEHOVAH enacts a decree concerning the *Levites*, who had no vintages to gather, nor any harvests to reap. He directs them to present the tenth part of their tythes, in the form of a heave-offering; adding, *And this your heave-offering* shall be reckoned * unto you, *as though it were the corn of the threshing-floor, and as the fulness of the wine-press;* as satisfactory to me, and as beneficial to you, as if it was the tenth of your own labours, and the tythe of your own increase.——So the expiatory sufferings which *CHRIST* endured, the complete obedience which he performed, are *reckoned* to true believers: And are altogether *as effectual* for obtaining their salvation, as if they were their own personal qualifications.

Ther. The imputation mentioned in your passage, is the imputation of something done by the *Levites themselves*, not of something done by *another*. This, I apprehend, is the true import of the word, when it occurs affirmatively in scripture.

Asp. This is *always* the import,—should have been said,

* Numb. xviii. 27. חשב exactly answers to St Paul's λογισθῆ, Rom. iv. 9.—The same phrase is used, and the same doctrine taught, Lev. xvii. 3, 4. *What man soever there be of the house of Israel that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp; and bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer unto the* LORD *an offering before the tabernacle of the* LORD, *blood shall be imputed to that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people.*—Here was no murder committed by the offender, yet the crime of murder is charged, or, as the scripture speaks, *blood is imputed to him.* Lest any should mistake the meaning of this expression, or not understand it in its due latitude, the divine LAWGIVER is his own interpreter; *He hath* in the eye of my justice *shed blood:* he shall pass for a murderer, and be punished as a murderer; he shall *be cut off from among his people.*—Thus also saith the eternal JUDGE concerning the believers in *CHRIST*; "The *righteousness* of "my SON *is imputed* to them; *they are*, in the eye of my "justice *righteous;* they shall be dealt with as righteous per-"sons; and made partakers of the kingdom of heaven."

ſaid, in order to make the objection forcible. But you could not ſo ſoon forget the inſtance juſt now alledged. St Paul ſpeaking of the crimes which Oneſimus had committed, and of the injuries which Philemon had ſuſtained, ſays, "Charge them all on me *. I "will be reſponſible for the one and for the other, "as much as if the whole guilt had been of my own "contracting."—Here is ſuppoſed, not the imputation of ſomething done by the apoſtle *himſelf*, but of *another*'s criminal behaviour.

Under the law, *Aaron* is commanded to *put the iniquities* of Iſrael upon the ſcape-goat †.—The ſame ſentiment is reinculcated, when the goat is ſaid to *bear the iniquities* of the people ‡. This was plainly an imputation; yet could not poſſibly be the imputation of any thing done by the devoted animal.—The *effects* which took place upon the execution of this ordinance, indicate a tranſlation of guilt. For the congregation was cleanſed, but the goat polluted. The congregation *ſo cleanſed*, that their iniquities were conveyed away, and to be found no more: the goat *ſo polluted*, that it communicated defilement to the perſon who conducted it into the land not inhabited.—All this was GOD's own appointment; and deſigned, like the whole ſyſtem of Moſaic ceremonies, to inſtruct his church in the knowledge of the great MEDIATOR; in whoſe perſon and office that was done *really*, which elſewhere could be accompliſhed no otherwiſe than *typically*.

Ther. If this is your meaning *Aſpaſio*, I am apt to think, it will be a difficult matter to make me a proſelyte. I muſt be content to paſs for one of the ſtiff-necked generation; ſince I can ſee neither *wiſdom* nor *equity*, in aſcribing to a perſon what he *has* not, or imputing to him what he *does* not.

Aſp. It was not *Aſpaſio*, but his friend, who ſet out with a view of making proſelytes. If I can maintain my

* Εμοι ελλογει. † Lev. xv. 21. ‡ Lev. xvi. 22.

my ground, and vindicate my own belief, it will be no inconſiderable acquiſition.—However, I ſhall not deſpair of ſeeing the partner of my heart become a ſharer of my faith. When we are convinced of our *numberleſs ſins;* when we feel the *depravity* of our *nature*, and begin to diſcern the *inconceivable ſanctity* of our JUDGE; THEN, perhaps, this exploded article may be found worthy of acceptance;—its conſtitution admired, as the wiſdom of GOD;—and its privilege coveted, as the conſolation of our ſouls.

Ther. I ſhall wave, at preſent, an examination of each particular; and only make ſome *remote* obſervations, which ſeem, nevertheleſs, pretty nearly to affect your ſcheme.—Some perſons, I dare be poſitive, have not ſo much as heard of your terms; many perſons have no manner of acquaintance with your doctrine. Will you ſtrike off all theſe from the liſt of Chriſtians? Will you condemn all theſe as deſperate infidels?

Aſp. Not heard of them!—in a Proteſtant nation!—where the goſpel is publicly preached, and the Bible in every one's hand!—This, if true, is much to be *lamented*.

In anſwer to your queſtion;—it is not my cuſtom, much leſs is it my prerogative, to *condemn* others. Has GOD committed all judgment unto me, that I ſhould preſume to anticipate the deciſive ſentence, or launch the thunderbolts of eternal vengeance?—Neither do I affirm the condition of ſuch perſons to be deſperate. There may be *thoſe*, who have no *explicit* knowledge of the doctrine, who are even *prejudiſed* againſt the expreſſions; yet live under the belief of the truth, and in the exerciſe of the duty.—"They are never "diverted, by the ſplendor of any thing that is great, "or by the conceit of any thing that is good in them, "from looking upon themſelves as *ſinful* duſt and "aſhes." Their whole dependence is upon that *JUST ONE*, who expired on the croſs, and whom

the heavens have received.—They seek the *sanctifying* SPIRIT, in consequence of their SAVIOUR's death; and give all diligence to *add to their faith, virtue* *.

Ther. If people may be safe, and their eternal interests secure, without any knowledge of these particularities; why should you offer to puzzle their heads, about a few unnecessary *scholastic* terms?

Asp. Scriptural terms, you should have said, *Theron.* —However, we are not very solicitous, as to the credit, or the use, of any particular set of phrases. Only let men be humbled, as *repenting criminals*, at the REDEEMER's feet, let them rely, as *devoted pensioners*, on his precious merits; and they are undoubtedly in the way to a blissful immortality.—Yet will their way be less clear, and their steps more embarassed, by not distinctly understanding the benign genius of the gospel. A proper information in this important point, would shed light upon their paths, and encourage them in their journey; would further their progress in vital holiness, and increase their joy in the LORD.

Ther. The followers of your opinion, I have observed, are perpetually dwelling upon this *one favourite* topic; to the exclusion of that grand and truly-essential part of Christianity, sanctification.

Asp. If you have ever taken notice of such a conduct, you are unquestionably right, in with-holding your approbation. It is a manifest *incongruity*, and deserves your *censure*. But, assure yourself, it proceeds from a misapprehension in the persons, and has no connection with the nature of the doctrine.

I am far, very far from reducing the *various* parts of Christianity (which, when connected, make up so well-proportioned a system) to this *single*, however distinguished, branch. Sanctification is equally necessary, both to our present peace, and to our final felicity. Indeed they are as reciprocally necessary for the purposes

* 2 Pet. i. 5.

purpoſes of intellectual and eternal happineſs, as the *heart* and the *lungs* are to the ſubſiſtence of the animal œconomy. The former muſt tranſmit, the latter muſt refine, the vital fluid; or elſe diſeaſe will take place, and death will enſue.—My intention is, that thoſe *fundamental truths* of the goſpel, like theſe *maſter-organs* in the body, may have each its proper office aſſigned; each concur to ſupport the better health, and to promote the ſpiritual growth of the Chriſtian.

Ther. Other of your zealous folks I have known, who are all for the *ſanctifying* influence of the SPIRIT; and reckon this affiance on the SAVIOUR's merits among the beggarly elements of religion. They ſcarce ever mention what *CHRIST* has done *for us*, but inſiſt wholly upon what he does *in us*.—When the religious people are ſo divided among themſelves *, how can a ſtranger act? which opinion ſhall he chuſe?

Aſp. Which, *Theron!* Let him diſcard neither, but aſſociate both.—If the all-gracious REDEEMER has poured out his blood on the croſs, that my guilt may be expiated; and preſents his interceſſion in heaven, that I may be endued with the SPIRIT:—if he will be the *meritorious cauſe* of my juſtification, and the *operative principle* of my ſanctification, why ſhould I ſcruple to receive him, in either, in both capacities? Who would lop off the right hand, in order to impart the higher dignity, or the greater importance, to the left? I would be no *partialiſt* in Chriſtianity; neither diminiſh her dowery, nor mutilate her privileges.

* *Theron*'s inquiry concerning theſe *two* particulars is ſometimes made an objection againſt *all* religion.—But have the gentlemen who adopt this objection, never ſeen the *naturaliſts* divided in their judgment, with relation to the deſign and uſe of ſeveral appearances in the material, the vegetable, the animal creation? while one decries as a *nuiſance*, what another admires as a *beauty*.—Yet no one, I believe, ever took it into his head, from ſuch a diverſity of opinions, to *doubt* whether the frame of nature is a juſt, a regular, and a finiſhed ſyſtem; or to *deny*, that power, goodneſs, and wiſdom, ſupport, pervade, and direct the whole.

Ther. You seem, if not to mutilate, yet to *split* the merits of *CHRIST*, and parcel out the efficacy of his mediatorial undertaking; ascribing so much to his active, and so much to his passive righteousness; pardon to *this*, and life to *that*.

Asp. Some, perhaps, may be pleased with this way of stating the matter. But it is a method which I neither attempt to defend, nor wish to imitate.—To *distinguish* between the active and passive righteousness, I think is not amiss; because this sets the fulness of our LORD's merit in the clearest light, and gives the completest honour to GOD's holy law.—But to *divide* them into detached portions, independent on each other, seems to be fanciful, rather than judicious. For, had *either* part of the mediatorial obedience been wanting, I apprehend, neither pardon, nor acceptance, nor any spiritual blessing, could have been vouchsafed to fallen man.

The two *parts* are inseparable; making, in their connection, a necessary and noble *whole* for the accomplishment of our salvation: Just as the light and the heat of yonder sun blend their operation, to produce this delightful day, and this fruitful weather.—However, therefore, I may happen to express myself, I never consider them as acting in the *exclusive* sense; but would always have them understood, as a grand and glorious aggregate: looking upon our SAVIOUR's universal obedience, which commenced at his incarnation, was carried on through his life, and terminated in his death;—looking upon all this, in its *collective* form, as the object of my faith, and the foundation of my hopes *.

Ther.

* In this opinion, *Aspasio* has *Milton*'s archangel for his precedent. *Michael*, speaking of *his* LORD and *our* LORD, says;

The law of God exact he shall fulfil,
Both by obedience and by love; though love

Alone

Ther. I think, you lay too much ſtreſs upon this controverted, and perhaps *merely-ſpeculative* point.

Aſp. Merely ſpeculative! Say not thus, my dear friend.—"How I may be juſtified before GOD, my "Maker, my Governor, and my Judge;" is an inquiry, of all others, the *moſt intereſting* and *important*. It is the main hinge, on which every inſtance of practical religion turns *. True comfort, willing obedience, holy communion with the divine MAJESTY, *all* depend upon this capital point.

Far from being a merely-ſpeculative point, it aſcribes the moſt *undivided* glory to the ever-bleſſed GOD, and his free grace.—It adminiſters the moſt *ſerene* and *ſubſtantial* ſatisfactions to frail, but believing men.—It cheriſhes with the moſt kindly influence, that *pure* and *undefiled* religion, which has its ſeat in the heart; has its birth from love; and is a real antepaſt, both of the buſineſs and the bliſs of ſaints in light.

Can we, then, lay too much ſtreſs upon a doctrine ſo greatly momentous, upon a privilege ſo extenſively beneficial?

Ther. When all this is *proved*, then for my reply, *Aſpaſio*. Nay, then you ſhall have more than a reply; I promiſe you my cordial aſſent.

Aſp.

Alone fulfil the law: thy puniſhment
He ſhall endure, *by coming in the fleſh*
To a reproachful life and curſed death;
Proclaiming life *to all who ſhall believe*
In his redemption. B. XII. 402.

According to the tenor of theſe very valuable lines, our LORD's fulfilling the law, and enduring the puniſhment, are the *concurring* cauſes, or the one *compound* cauſe, of life and redemption to ſinners.

* *Diffundit ſe*, ſays the judicious *Witſius*, *juſtificationis doctrina per totum theologiæ corpus; et prout fundamenta hic vel bene, vel male, jacta ſunt, eo univerſum ædificium vel ſolidius auguſtiuſque aſcendit, vel male ſtatuminatum fædam minitatur ruinam.* De Oecon. See above, p. vii. viii.

Asp. And if all this be incapable of proof, I assure you, *Theron*, I will not solicit *your* assent. Nay more, I will revoke and renounce *my own*.

Ther. At present, I believe, we must go in, and prepare for our visitants. Some other interview will give us an opportunity to canvass this question more minutely.

Asp. Though I have never much inclination, even when there is the most leisure, for controversy; yet if you insist upon it, I shall not absolutely refuse to engage in a debate with my *Theron:* because he will come to the amicable rencounter, without bringing *angry passions* for his second.—My reasons will be impartially weighed, not artfully eluded, much less answered with invective.—If some inadvertent expression should drop from my lips, he will not rigorously prosecute the slip; nor aggravate an unguarded sentence into the crime of heresy.—Candour will form his judgment, and good-nature dictate his expressions.

Ther. I thank you, my dear *Aspasio*, for your genteel admonition. What *I am* in the language of complaisance, means what I *should be*.—Well: I will endeavour to take your hint, and check this my impetuosity of spirit. I have admired, O! that I could imitate, the beautiful example of St *Paul*. When *Festus*, forgetting the dignity of the governor, and the politeness of the gentleman, uttered that indecent reflection, *Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad:* did the great preacher of Christianity kindle into resentment?—The charge was unjust and abusive. But the apostle, with the most perfect command of himself, returned the *softest*, yet the *most spirited* answer imaginable: *I am not mad, most noble* Festus; *but speak the words of truth and soberness* *.

—Inexpressibly

* See Acts xxvi. where we have *an apology*, the most delicate and masterly, perhaps, that ever was made; eminent for *fine* address,

—Inexpreſſibly graceful was this calm and obliging reply. Tho' ſhort, infinitely more convincing than a whole torrent of bitter or recriminating words. It diſarmed the judge of his riſing diſpleaſure; it conciliated the favour of his royal aſſeſſor; and brought honour to the Chriſtian cauſe.

This amiable *ſelf-regimen*, and moderation of temper, I ſhall be ſure to ſee exemplified in my friend's converſation; however I may fail of it myſelf, or be proof againſt all his arguments.

Aſp. Ah! *Theron*, we want no monitor, to remind us of our *ſuppoſed* excellencies. And if you begin with your compliments, it is time to put an end to our diſcourſe.

Only let me juſt obſerve, that *divine truths* cannot be properly diſcerned, but by the enlightening influences of the *divine SPIRIT*. We muſt addreſs ourſelves to this inquiry, not only with unprejudiſed minds, but likewiſe with praying hearts. We muſt bring to this diſpute, not barely the quiver of logic, but that *unction from the HOLY ONE, which may teach us all things* *.—Let us then adopt the poet's aſpiration;

——————*Thou celeſtial Light,*
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes; all miſt from thence
Purge and diſperſe! MILTON, b. III. l. 51.

DIA-

dreſs, *clear* reaſoning, and *important* truth. Which, notwithſtanding all theſe very ſuperior recommendations, is deemed *madneſs*; and that by a nobleman from *Rome*; the ſeat of ſcience, and fountain-head of polite literature.—A proof this, no leſs demonſtrative than deplorable, of the apoſtle's aſſertion; *The natural man* however ingenious or accompliſhed, *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of GOD; for they are fooliſhneſs unto him*, 1 Cor. ii. 14.

* 1 John ii. 20, 27.

DIALOGUE III.

Ther. WE are now, *Aſpaſio*, about two miles diſtant from my houſe. The horſe-road lyes through a narrow duſty lane. The foot-path leads along a ſpacious pleaſant *meadow*. Suppoſe we deliver our horſes to the ſervant, and walk the remainder of the way?

Aſp. You could not make a propoſal more agreeable to my inclination; eſpecially, as the air is become cool, and the walk is ſo inviting.

What a magnificent and charming ſcene! *hills* on either ſide, gently riſing, and widely ſpreading; their *ſummits* crowned with ſcattered villages, and cluſtering trees: their *ſlopes* divided into a beauteous chequer-work; conſiſting partly of tillage, with its waving crops; partly of paſturage, with its grazing herds. —Before us, the trefoil, the clover, and a variety of graſſy plants, differently bladed, and differently branched, weave themſelves into a *carpet* of living green. Can any of the manufactures formed in the looms, or extended in the palaces of *Perſia*, vie with the covering of this ample area? vie with it, in grandeur of ſize, or delicacy of decoration?

What a profuſion of the gayeſt flowers, fringing the banks, and embroidering the plain!

———————*Nature here*
Wantons, as in her prime, and plays at will
Her virgin-fancies, pouring forth more ſweet,
Wild above rule or art, enormous bliſs *!*

Nothing can be brighter than the luſtre of thoſe ſilver *daiſies;* nothing deeper than the tinge of thoſe golden *crowfoots*. Yet both ſeem to acquire additional beauty, by ſucceeding to the deformity of winter, and

* MILT. b. V.

and flouriſhing amidſt ſo much ſurrounding verdure.

Ther. Nature is truly in *her prime*.—The vegetable tribes are putting on their richeſt attire. Thoſe cheſnuts, on our right hand, begin to rear their flowering pyramids; thoſe willows, on our left, are tipt with taſſels of grey; and yonder poplars, which overlook the river, and ſeem to command the meadows, are pointed with rolls of ſilver.

The *hawthorn*, in every hedge, is partly turgid with ſilken gems, partly diffuſed into a milk-white bloom. Not a ſtraggling furze, nor a ſolitary thicket, but wears a rural noſegay. All is a delightful diſplay of preſent fertility, and a joyous pledge of future plenty.—Now we experience what the royal poet, in very delicate imagery, deſcribes: *The winter is paſt; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the ſinging of birds is come; and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs; and the vine, with the tender grapes, give a good ſmell* *.

Aſp. Your quotation and the ſcene remind me of a remark, which ſhould have taken place in our laſt night's diſcourſe. When we were enumerating the excellencies of the ſacred writings, methinks, we might have added;—Are you fond of *paſtoral*, in all its flowery graces, and blooming honours? Never have we ſeen ſuch exquiſite touches of rural painting, or ſuch ſweet images of endeared affection, as in the *Song of ſongs, which is Solomon's*. All the brilliant and amiable appearances in nature are employed to delineate the tenderneſs of *his* heart, who is *love* itſelf;—to pourtray the beauty of *his* perſon, who is the *chiefeſt among ten thouſand;*—and deſcribe the happineſs of *thoſe* ſouls, whoſe *fellowſhip is with the FATHER, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST* †.

See! *Theron* what the chearing warmth and the genial

* Cant. ii. 11, 12, 13. † 1 John i. 3.

genial showers of spring have done! *Such a change*, so pleasing and so ennobling, the gospel of *CHRIST* introduces into the soul.—Not a day, scarce an hour passes, but this season of universal fecundity produces something *new*. And is there any state, or any circumstance of life, on which the faith of *CHRIST* does not exert a similar efficacy, and bring forth fruit unto GOD?

This is supposed to be the spiritual meaning of that fine descriptive picture which you have borrowed from the *Canticles*. It displays the *benign agency* of grace and its doctrines; especially of our *LORD*'s satisfaction for sin, and of his righteousness imputed to sinners. These operate, with much the same favourable and happy energy, both on our morals and our comforts, as the *sweet influences* of the vernal sun operate on the sprouting herbs, and opening flowers.

Ther. If such were the effects of your doctrine, it would stand the fairer chance for general acceptation.—But there are several weighty scruples to be removed before persons of a *liberal* and *enlarged* way of thinking can acquiesce in your opinion. Who, for instance, can persuade himself, that what you call *the satisfactions of CHRIST*, is consistent with the dictates of reason, or with the perfections of the DEITY?

Asp. Let gentlemen be candid in their inquiries, and *truly* liberal in their way of thinking; then, I flatter myself, these scruples may be removed without much difficulty.

GOD, the almighty Creator, and supreme Governor of the world, having made man, gave him a law; with a *penalty* annexed, in case of disobedience.—This sacred law our forefather *Adam* presumptuously broke; and we, his posterity, were *involved* in his guilt. Or, should that point be controverted, *we* have undeniably made, by many personal transgressions, *his* apostasy *our own*.—Insomuch, that all have sinned; have forfeited their happiness, and rendered themselves obnoxious to punishment. Man

Man being thus ruined, none could recover him, except his injured MAKER. But shall he be recovered, shall he be restored, without suffering the punishment *due* to his crime, and *threatened* by his CREATOR?—What then will become of the *justice* of the divine LAWGIVER? And how shall the *honour* of his holy law be maintained? At this rate, who would reverence its authority, or fear to violate its precepts? —Sinners might be emboldened to multiply their transgressions; and tempted to think, that the GOD of immaculate holiness, the GOD of unchangeable veracity, is *altogether such an one as themselves* *.

Does it not appear needful, that *some* expedient be devised, in order to prevent these dishonourable and horrid consequences?

Ther. Proceed to inform us, what the expedient is.

Asp. To ascertain the dignity of the supreme administration, yet rescue mankind from utter destruction, this admirable purpose was formed, and in the fulness of time executed. The second person of the ever-blessed TRINITY unites the human nature to the divine; *submits* himself to the obligations of his people; and becomes *responsible* for all their guilt. In this capacity, he performs a perfect obedience, and undergoes the sentence of death; makes a full expiation of their sins, and establishes their title to life.—By which means, the law is satisfied; justice is magnified; and the richest grace exercised. Man enjoys a *great salvation*, not to the discredit of *any*, but to the unspeakable glory of *all*, the divine attributes.

This is what we mean by *CHRIST*'s satisfaction. And this, I should imagine, wants no recommendation to

* This was actually the case, as we are informed by the SEARCHER of hearts, when, on a particular occasion, punishment was only *retarded*. How much more would such impious opinions have prevailed, if, on this grand act of disobedience, punishment had been entirely *forborne*? Psal. l. 21.

to our *unprejudiced reason;* as, I am sure, it is most delightfully accommodated to our *distressed condition.* —It is also confirmed by many express passages of scripture, and illustrated by a variety of very significant images.

Ther. Pray, let me be favoured with some of your scriptural images.—After which, we may inquire, whether your doctrine will stand the test of reason.

Asp. What is your notion of a *ransom?* When *Priam* redeemed the dead body of *Hector* from the victorious *Achilles*, how was it done?

Ther. By paying a *price* *.—Thus *Fabius* recovered the captives which were taken by *Hannibal.* He transmitted the sum required, and they were discharged from their confinement.

Asp. Such is the redemption procured for sinners by our *LORD JESUS CHRIST.* Of such a nature, (tho' incomparably more grand and august in all its circumstances,) and expressed by the very same word †. *The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to give his life a ransom for many.*

CHRIST also *paid* a price,—a *real* price,—a most *satisfactory* price. In consideration of which, our freedom from every penal evil is granted. *Ye are redeemed,*

* ——————————φερων τ' απειρισι' αποινα,

an *infinitely* rich price. *Hyperbolical* this, as applied by *Homer; strictly true*, when referred to *CHRIST.*

† Λυτρον απολυτρω, are used in this *precise* signification, by the most approved authors of Greece.——Απεπεμψε τα λυτρα Αννιβα, και τους αιχμαλωτους απεκαβεν, says Plutarch. Ο υιος του ανθρωπου ηλθε δουναι την ψυχην αυτου λυτρον αντι πολλων, says our blessed SAVIOUR, *Matth.* xx. 28.—Απελυτρωσε ταλαντιον εννεα, is the language of Demosthenes. Εν ω εχομεν την απολυτρωσιν δια του αιματος αυτου, are the words of St Paul, *Eph.* i. 7.—To *establish* this important point, and to *familiarize* the comfortable idea to our minds, the sacred writers abound in this phraseology. See *Luke* i. 68. ii. 38. xxiv. 21.——*Rom.* iii. 24.——*Tit.* ii. 14.——*Heb.* ix. 12,

ed *, says the apostle, *not with corruptible things, silver and gold, but with the precious blood of CHRIST.*—Let me add one text more, which, in the same style of *commutative* justice, asserts the same truth. *CHRIST has redeemed us* †, hath bought us off, *from the curse of the law.*—Yes, my friend,

The ransom was paid down. The fund of heav'n,
Heav'n's inexhaustible exhausted fund,
Amazing and amaz'd, pour'd forth the price,
All price beyond. Though curious to compute,
Archangels fail'd to cast the mighty sum ‡.

Ther. Hold a little, good *Aspasio*. Consider the consequence of what you maintain. If there was a ransom in the case, to *whom* was it paid?—The *devil* had led sinners captive. They are said to be the slaves of Satan. And shall the blessed *JESUS* pay his life to that accursed fiend? Shocking to imagine!—Yet, shocking as it is, it must follow from your own, and your poet's assertion.

Asp. You misapprehend the case, *Theron*. The ransom was paid to GOD. *Thou hast redeemed us to* GOD ||, is the confession of the saints in light.—Satisfaction was made to the divine *law*, and to the divine *justice*. The one of which was offended; the other violated; and both concurred to denounce the transgressor's doom. Of which doom *Satan* was only the destined executioner; whose malignity, and implacable rage, GOD is pleased to make the instrument of inflicting his vengeance; as he formerly used the

* 1 *Pet.* i. 18. We have an *equivalent* expression, used in the *same* signification, by one of the correctest writers in the world;

Et fratrem Pollux alterna *morte* redemit. VIRG.

† *Gal.* iii. 13. ἐξηγόρασεν.—We are said to be *bought*, 1 Cor. vi. 20.; not in a metaphorical sense, but really and properly. For here the price is *mentioned*; and by St *Peter* the price is *specified*, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

‡ Night-Thoughts, N° IV. || Rev. v. 9.

the idolatrous kings of *Assyria* and *Babylon*, to chastise the disobedient *Israelites*.

When we were without strength *, utterly ruined, yet absolutely helpless; when none, in heaven or earth, could afford us any succour; *then* our *LORD JESUS CHRIST* most graciously and most seasonably interposed. He *said*, as it is very emphatically represented by *Elihu*, *Deliver them from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom* †. He *did*, what is very beautifully described by our *English classic;*

———*So man, as is most just,*
Shall satisfy *for man, be judg'd, and die;*
And dying rise, and rising with him raise
His brethren, ransom'd *with his own dear life* ‡.

Ther. But pray, do not you allow, that *CHRIST* is truly and properly GOD?

Asp. We not only allow it, but we insist upon it, and make our boast of it. This is the very foundation of *his* merit, and the support of *our* hope.

Ther. This may aggrandize the merit of *CHRIST*, but it will increase the difficulty of your task. For, according to this opinion, *CHRIST* must make satisfaction *to himself*. And is not this a practice quite unprecedented? a notion perfectly absurd?

Asp. It is *quite unprecedented*, you say. On this point, I shall not vehemently contend. Only let me mention one instance. *Zaleucus*, you know, the prince of the *Locrians*, made a decree, That whoever was convicted of adultery, should be punished with the loss of both his eyes. Soon after this establishment, the legislator's *own son* was apprehended in the very fact, and brought to a public trial. How could the father acquit himself, in so tender and delicate a conjuncture? Should he *execute* the law, in all its rigour, this would be worse than death to the unhappy youth. Should he *pardon* so notorious a delinquent, this would defeat the design of his salutary institution. To avoid both

* Rom. v. 6. † Job xxxiii. 24. ‡ MILT. b. III. 294.

both these inconveniencies, he ordered one of his own eyes to be pulled out, and one of his son's: By which means, the rights of justice were preserved inviolate; yet the tenderness of a parent was remarkably indulged. And may we not venture to say, that, in this case, *Zaleucus* both received and made the satisfaction? *received* it as a magistrate, even while he *made* it as a father.

Ther. I cannot see, how this suffering of the father was, in any degree, *satisfactory* to the law; since the father and the son could not be considered as *one* and the *same* person. It may pass for an extraordinary instance of parental indulgence; it may strike the benevolent and compassionate hearer: but if tried at the bar of equity and reason, it will hardly be admitted as any legal satisfaction; it will probably be condemned, as a breach of nature's first and fundamental law, self-preservation.

Asp. What you observe, *Theron*, I must confess, has weight. It will oblige me to give up my illustration. Nevertheless, what you urge against the *propriety* of the comparison, tends to establish the *certainty* of the doctrine. For *CHRIST* and his people are actually considered as one and the same person. They are *one* mystical *body;* he the head, they the members; so intimately united to him, that they are *bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh* *. By virtue of which union, their sins were punished in him, and *by his stripes they are healed* †, they obtain impunity and life.

Though there may be nothing in the procedure of men, which bears any resemblance to this miracle of heavenly goodness; it receives a sufficient confirmation from the language of scripture. He who wrote as an amanuensis to the unerring SPIRIT, has declared, that *GOD was in CHRIST, reconciling the world,*—unto whom? unto some third party? No; but reconciling it, by the death and obedience of *CHRIST,*

* Eph. v. 30. Col. i. 20. † Is. liii. 5.

CHRIST,—unto himself *. And I can very readily grant, that this divine exertion of benignity and wisdom should be without *a precedent*, and without *a parallel* †.

Difficulties, I own, may attend the explication of this article, or to be interwoven with its consequences. At the same time I must affirm, that our apprehensions of heavenly things are so *obscure*, and our ideas of the divine benevolence so *scanty*, that we may very possibly mistake; and fancy that to be absurd, which is only great, wonderful, and incomprehensible ‡. Nor shall I be thought presumptuous in adding, that it will be impossible for all the sagacity in the world, to prove this doctrine *an absurdity*, though it should ever remain *an inexplicable* mystery. How many phænomena in the constitution of external nature, are confessedly mysterious and inexplicable! They challenge, they command our assent; yet *baffle* all our researches, and *defy* our utmost penetration. If then we find this truth

* 2 Cor. v. 19.

† *Fancy*, in the person of *Horace*, said of *Jupiter* and his fabulous exploits,

Cui nihil viget simile aut secundum.

Much more will *Reason*, in the character of a *believer*, say the same of JEHOVAH and his marvellous *grace*.

‡ Its *unparalleled*, nay, its *incomprehensible* nature, is no objection to its truth and reality. This is rather a circumstance, which perfectly agrees with the testimony of the inspired writers; and affords, in my opinion, an unanswerable argument for the divine origin of Christianity.

It agrees with the testimony of the inspired writers; who call it, not only *GOD's wisdom*, by way of supereminent distinction, but *his wisdom in a mystery*, even *his hidden wisdom*; which could not possibly have been conceived by any finite mind, however enlarged or sagacious.—*Affords an unanswerable argument for the divine origin of Christianity.* Since it was infinitely too deep for the contrivance of men, and absolutely undiscoverable by the penetration of angels; *how* could it be known, but by manifestation from above? *Whence* could it take its rise, but from an especial revelation?

truth fully and inconteſtably revealed in the Bible, we muſt renounce the philoſopher, before we can *conſiſtently* act the ſceptic.

Ther. Let us ſee then, whether it be ſo fully and inconteſtably revealed in the Bible. You have given me, as yet, but *one* of your ſcriptural images.

Aſp. I have another at your ſervice. *CHRIST* is called an *High Prieſt*. What do you take to be the nature of the prieſtly office?

Ther. The buſineſs of the prieſt was, I apprehend, to offer ſacrifices, and to make interceſſion for the people.

Aſp. Very true; and *CHRIST* could not with any propriety receive this appellation, if he had been defective in performing *either* of the ſacerdotal functions. Now, that he offered no ſuch victim as ſlain beaſts, is univerſally acknowledged. We might preſume therefore, even though we had not the authority of an apoſtle to aſſure us, that *he offered HIMSELF, thro' the eternal SPIRIT, to GOD* *.

The croſs, ſhall I ſay †? rather his divine nature was the *altar*. His ſoul and body, each immaculately pure, were the *holocauſt*. Theſe he reſigned; the one, to deadly wounds; the other, to inexpreſſible anguiſh; and both, to be inſtead of all whole-burnt offerings. —On this invaluable oblation, his interceſſion at the right

* Heb. ix. 14.

† The *croſs* is, by ſome authors, ſtyled the *altar*. But, I think, improperly. This notion ſeems to have ſprung from, or given riſe to, the *Popiſh* practice of idolizing the *crucifix*. At leaſt, it countenances ſuch a kind of foppiſh or ſacrilegious devotion, more than a Proteſtant writer could wiſh.—It was the property of the altar, to *ſanctify the gift*. This therefore, when referred to our LORD's ſacrifice, is a far more exalted office, than we dare aſcribe to the *inſtrument* of his ſuffering. This muſt be the honour and prerogative of his DIVINE NATURE, which did indeed ſanctify the great oblation; gave it a dignity, a merit, an efficacy, unſpeakable and everlaſting.

right hand of his FATHER is founded; from this it derives that prevailing efficacy, which is the security of his *ſtanding*, and the recovery of his *fallen* diſciples.

Give me leave to aſk farther, What is your idea of a *ſacrifice?* When *Iphigenia* was ſlain at the altar, what was the import of that memorable action?

Ther. It was intended, if we may credit *Virgil*'s account *, to *appeaſe* the indignation of the ſuperior powers, and to obtain a *propitious* gale for the wind-bound fleet, and confederate forces of *Greece*. But, I hope, you would not make that ſolemn butchery of the royal virgin, a pattern for the ſupreme goodneſs; nor the practice of groſs idolaters, a model for the religion of the holy *JESUS*.

Aſp. By no means, *Theron*. Only I would obſerve, that the cuſtom of offering ſacrifices obtained among the moſt cultivated nations of the Heathen world; that theſe ſacrifices were frequently of the *vicarious* † kind;

* *Sanguine placaſti ventos, et virgine cæſa.*

† *Seneca* ſays, alluding to the cuſtom of ſacrifices, and the prevailing opinion concerning them; *Fuerim tantum nunquam amplius dolituræ domus piamentum* —What we are to underſtand by *piamentum*, our author himſelf explains, in the preceding clauſe; *Quicquid matri dolendum fuerit, in me tranſierit; quicquid aviæ, in me.* To which his judicious commentator *Lipſius*, from an extenſive knowledge of antiquity, adds; καθαρμα *ſive piacularis victima.* SEN. ad *Helv.*

The ſame writer, in the ſame conſolatory epiſtle, has another ſentence, ſtill more to our purpoſe; *Nobilitatur omnium carnificibus, quæ* ſe pro *conjuge* vicariam dedit.—*Juvenal*, ſpeaking of this very fact, expreſſes himſelf in very remarkable language; ſuch as ſhews us, with the utmoſt *clearneſs* and *preciſion*, what the ancients meant, when they affirmed of a ſuffering or dying perſon, that *he gave himſelf for* another:

————*Spectat* ſubeuntem fata *mariti*
Alceſtim, et ſimilis ſi permutatio *detur.* Sat. VI.

There is a paſſage in *Livy*, which moſt of all deſerves our notice; as it ſeems to imply a popular belief of the dignity, the more than human dignity, of the ſacrifice which was neceſſary

kind; in which the victim was ſubſtituted inſtead of the offerer; and the former being cut off, the latter was diſcharged from punithment: conſequently, that the *claſſic* authors would (in caſe there was any need of ſuch auxiliaries) join with the ſacred writers, to declare the *expediency*, and explain the *nature* of ſacrifices. This alſo you will permit me to add, that, if the Heathens talk ſenſibly on any part of religious worſhip, it is on the ſubject of ſacrifices. Their ſentiments concerning expiatory oblations, ſeem to be the *faint* and *diſtant* echo of revelation. And I have uſually conſidered them, not as the inſtitutions of mere reaſon, but as the remains of ſome broken tradition.

However, the trueſt and moſt authentic ſignification of a ſacrifice, is to be learned from the *Jewiſh* ritual, explained by the goſpel-comment. Do you remember the *Moſaic* account of that ordinance?

Ther. You are much better acquainted, *Aſpaſio*, with thoſe *ſacred antiquities*; and can give the moſt ſatisfactory information with regard to this particular. Only let me remind you, that alms are ſtyled offerings; and *praiſes*, both in the prophetical and evangelical writings, come under the denomination of ſacrifices.

Aſp. Though praiſes and alms are ſtyled ſacrifices, they are not of the *propitiatory*, but *euchariſtic* kind. They are never ſaid to *expiate* tranſgreſſions, only are repreſented as *acceptable* to GOD through *JESUS CHRIST*; that divinely-precious victim, whoſe merits both cancel our guilt, and commend our ſervices! According to——

Ther. Stay a moment, *Aſpaſio*.—Let me recollect myſelf.—This may be the meaning of ſacrifices, as ordained by *Moſes*, and ſolemnized among the *Jews*.—"Sacrifices were a ſymbolical addreſs to GOD; in-

 "tended

neceſſary to appeaſe the wrath of heaven. It relates to *Decius*, devoting himſelf for the public good; *Conſpectus ab utraque acie*, ab quanto auguſtior humano viſu, *ſicuti cœlo miſſus, piaculum omnis deorum ira.* Lib. VIII. cap. ix.

" tended to expreſs before him the devotion, affec-
" tions, diſpoſitions, and deſires of the heart by ſig-
" nificative and emblematical actions."—Or thus;
" The prieſt made atonement for ſin, by ſacrificing a
" beaſt, only as that was a ſign and teſtimony of the
" ſacrificer's pure and upright heart."

Aſp. Sacrifices, I acknowledge, were a ſymbolical addreſs to GOD.—But would you confine their efficacy, *only* to the death of the animal, and the purity of the offerer? No, *Theron:* they always had a reference to the great ſacrifice,—ordained in the eternal counſels of JEHOVAH;—prepared, when the co-eternal SON was made fleſh;—offered, when the bleſſed *JESUS* ſurrendered himſelf, to be led as a lamb to the ſlaughter.—They were ſo far from being *independent* of this divine oblation, that they acted in *perpetual* ſubſerviency to it, and derived *all* their virtue from it. They were the ſhadow, but the body was *CHRIST.*

" They expreſſed," you ſay, " the devotion, af-
" fections, diſpoſitions, and deſires of the heart."
But I rather think, they expreſſed the guilt and the faith of the offerer.—*His guilt;* for this ſeems to be intimated, by the very *names* of the propitiatory ſacrifices; the ſin and the ſacrifice, the offending action and the expiatory rite, being ſignified by one and the ſame word *. It is ſomewhat more than intimated, by the *occaſion* of the offering, and the *ſtate* of the offerer. Since it was only on account of guilt contracted, that piacular oblations were made; and only from a guilty perſon that they were required.—*His faith;* or firm belief, that *ceremonial* guilt, which ſhut him out from the communion of the viſible church, and ſubjected him to the infliction of temporal judgments, was removed by *theſe;* but that *moral* guilt, which

* חטאת denotes a *ſin*, and *ſin-offering*, Lev. iv. 3, 24. אשם ſignifies the *treſpaſs*, and the *treſpaſs-offering*, Lev. v. 15, 19.

which defiles the soul, and excludes from heaven, should be purged by *some better sacrifice than these* *. In the exercise of this faith, *Abel* offered up a more acceptable sacrifice than *Cain*; and without this faith, exercised in some degree, it was impossible to please GOD.

If sacrifices were intended to bespeak *integrity of heart*, methinks, the state of *innocency* had been the propereſt period for their institution and oblation. But we never hear of this awful ceremony till man is fallen, and sin committed.—If intended to denote *purity of heart*, why should they be particularly enjoined on that solemn day, when confession was made of *all the sins* † of the whole congregation? An oddly concerted device this! in which the tongue must contradict what the ceremony would recognize. Or, how could it be proper, after the *violation* of some law, or the *neglect* of some ordinance, immediately to go and offer a sacrifice? What would be the language of such a practice? "I have done wickedly, but my "heart is pure and upright." Is this consistent with the spirit of humility, of modesty, or of common ingenuity? Is this the way of *giving glory* to GOD, or of *taking shame* to ourselves? Whereas, let the sacrifice be a typical expiation, and this is the significancy of the action: "LORD, I confess myself guilty. "Punishment and death are *my due*. Let them fall, I "beseech thee, on *my victim* ‡; that thy justice being "glorified, and thy law satisfied, thy mercy may be "honourably displayed in my forgiveness."

Besides,

* They *sanctified to the purifying of the flesh*, Heb. ix. 13. *but could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience*, Heb. ix. 9.

† Lev. xvi. 21.

‡ What says that prodigy of oriental learning, *Bochart? Hoc eodem ritu iram Dei peccator deprecabatur, eamque immitti petebat in illius victimæ caput, quam sibi loco ponebat.* Hierozoic. tom. I. lib. ii. cap. 54.

Beſides, *Theron*, what *likeneſs*, what *agreement* is there, between the profeſſion of integrity, and an animal mortally wounded, wallowing in its own blood, and ſtruggling in the agonies of death? Whereas, between theſe dying pangs, and the puniſhment due to ſin, or the ſorrows ſuſtained by the crucified SAVIOUR, there is an *apparent*, a *ſtriking*, and, in various reſpects, an *edifying* reſemblance.

Ther. They declared, perhaps, the ſacrificer's readineſs and reſolution to ſlay the brute in himſelf, and to lay down his life in adherence to GOD.

Aſp. I don't remember any aſſertion of this kind in the Bible, or any hint to countenance ſuch an interpretation. It ſeems, in ſome caſes, to be incompatible with the very nature of things, and contrary to the expreſs declarations of ſcripture. *Doves*, you know, *lambs*, and *ſheep* were offered in ſacrifice. But ſhall we ſlay the lamb, the dove, the ſheep in ourſelves? So far from it, that *CHRIST*'s diſciples are either deſcribed by theſe creatures, or commanded to imitate their properties. *Be ye harmleſs as doves* *. *Peter, feed my lambs* †. *My ſheep hear my voice* ‡.

Suppoſing, however, that this might be a ſubordinate deſign, or a valuable improvement of the ſacrificial acts; yet their *primary* intention, and *ultimate* end, were widely different; were much more ſignificant of the divine compaſſions, and much better adapted to the comfort of mankind. They were an *awful indication*, that death was the wages of ſin; at the ſame time, a *chearing declaration*, that GOD was pleaſed to accept the death of the animal, inſtead of the ſinner's; a *figurative repreſentation* ‖ alſo of that illuſtrious PERSON, who was *to bear the ſin of many, and pour out his ſoul for tranſgreſſors*.

Ther.

* Matth. x. 16. † John xxi. 15. ‡ John x. 27.

‖ What ſays *Milton* upon this ſubject of ſacrifices, and with reference to their *principal* deſign? He calls them

Religious rites
Of ſacrifice; informing men, by types

And

Ther. Since ſacrifices were of a religious nature, they ſhould not only be inſtructive and beneficial in their tendency; but have their *due effects*, with regard to GOD, to ſin, and to the perſon who brought them.

Aſp. They had their effects *with regard to* GOD; that his juſtice might be magnified, and his anger appeaſed:—*to ſin;* that its demerit might be diſplayed, yet its guilt be done away:—*to the perſon who brought them;* that he might obtain pardon, be exempted from puniſhment, and exerciſe his faith on the *LORD JESUS CHRIST.*

Ther. There are ſo many ſorts of ſacrifice appointed in the *Jewiſh* rubric, that I am at a loſs for a *diſtinct* idea; unleſs ſome one be ſingled out, and ſeparately conſidered.

Aſp. Among all the ſacrifices inſtituted by *Moſes*, none more circumſtantially typified the bleſſed *JESUS*, or more appoſitely expreſſed the benefits of his oblation, than the *paſchal lamb*, and the *ſin-offering* on the day of atonement.

An expoſitor, who cannot be miſtaken, has given us this interpretation of the paſchal lamb; *CHRIST our paſſover is ſacrificed for us* *: declaring hereby,—that

And ſhadows, of that deſtin'd ſeed to bruiſe
The ſerpent, by what means he ſhall atchieve
Mankind's deliverance. B. XII. ver. 231.

* 1 *Cor.* v. 7. Would any one venture to ſay, *Paul our paſſover is ſacrificed for us?* Yet this, I think, *may be*, or rather *is* in effect ſaid, by the account which ſome perſons give of *CHRIST*'s ſatisfaction.—The very thought of ſuch a blaſphemous abſurdity, is too *painful* and *offenſive* for the ſerious Chriſtian to dwell upon. I would therefore divert his attention to a more pleaſing object. Let him obſerve the exquiſite ſkill, which, here and every where, conducts the zeal of our inſpired writer.—The odes of *Pindar* are celebrated for their *fine tranſitions;* which, though bold and ſurpriſing, are perfectly natural. We have, in this place, a very maſterly ſtroke of the ſame beautiful kind. The apoſtle, ſpeaking of the *inceſtu-*

ous

that *CHRIST* is a *real* ſacrifice ;—that he was *prefigured*, in this capacity, by the paſchal lamb ;—that the *circumſtances*, which diſtinguiſhed it, met in him ; and the *advantages*, which reſulted from it, were procured by him ; *thoſe*, in their trueſt import ; *theſe*, in their largeſt extent.—The words of the apoſtle ſpeak this ſenſe, to the plaineſt ſimpleſt reader. Whereas, to extort any other ſignification from them, what ſubtilty of wit, and what refinement, or rather violence of criticiſm, muſt be uſed !

The paſchal lamb was *without blemiſh*. Such was the LAMB of GOD; free from all taint of original ſin, and from every ſpot of actual tranſgreſſion.—A lamb of *the firſt year*, in all the ſprightlineſs and floridity of youth. *CHRIST* alſo laid down his life, not when worn with age, or debilitated with ſickneſs ; but in the very prime of his days ; amidſt all the bloom of health, and all the vigour of manhood.—The lamb was to be ſlain in ſuch a manner, as might occaſion the moſt *copious effuſion* of its blood. And was not this very exactly fulfilled in our ſuffering SAVIOUR ? His blood flowed out, in vaſt abundance, by the amazing *ſweat* in the garden ; by the rending laſhes of the *ſcourge ;* by the lacerating points of the *thorns ;* by the dreadful *nails*, which cleft his hands and his feet ; by the deadly *ſpear*, which ripped open his ſide, and cut its way to his heart.—Though the blood was to be ſo liberally ſpilt, *a bone* of the LAMB *was not to be broken*. And you cannot but recollect, you cannot but admire, the wonderful interpoſition of Providence, to accompliſh this *emblematical prediction*. When the ſoldiers had received a command to break the legs of the three crucified perſons ; when they had actually broke

ous criminal, paſſes, by a moſt artful digreſſion, to his darling topic, a *crucified* SAVIOUR. Who would have expected it, on ſuch an occaſion ? Yet, when *thus* admitted, who does not ſee and admire, both the propriety of the ſubject, and the delicacy of its introduction ?

broke the legs of each malefactor, which hung on the right side of our LORD and on the left; their minds were over-ruled (by a divine influence, no doubt) to spare the blessed *JESUS*, and to leave all his bones *unhurt, untouched.*

The lamb was to be killed *before the whole assembly*; in the presence, either of the whole congregation of *Israel*, or else of that particular society, which concurred in eating the flesh. And did not the whole multitude of the *Jews* conspire against our REDEEMER, to put him to death? Did they not all cry out, as with one voice, *Crucify him! Crucify him!* Was he not executed, at one of their grand festivals, and in the sight of the *whole assembled* nation?—The blood was not to be poured heedlessly upon the ground, but received carefully into a bason; and *sprinkled*, with the utmost punctuality, *upon the door-posts*. In like manner, the blood of the heavenly LAMB is not to be trampled under foot, by a contemptuous disregard. It is the treasure of the church, and the medicine of life; to be *received* therefore by an humble faith, and devoutly *applied* to our consciences.—The sprinkling of that blood *secured* every *Israelitish* family from the destroying angel's sword. So the merits of the slaughtered SAVIOUR * screen every believing sinner from the stroke of offended justice, and from the pains of eternal death. What must have become of the *Israelite*, who, trusting to the uprightness of his heart,

* Both St *Peter* and St *Paul* speak of *the blood of sprinkling*, 1 Pet. i. 2. Heb. xii. 24.; intimating, by this remarkable form of speech, that the death of *CHRIST*, will be of *no advantage* to the sinner, unless it be *applied* to his heart; as the blood of the paschal lamb was no protection to an *Israelite*, till it had tinged the posts of his door.—*Isaiah*, using the same phrase, and alluding to the same custom, says of our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*, *He shall sprinkle many nations*, lii. 15. Not only initiate them into his church by baptism; but also, by the application of his blood, shall *cleanse* them from their *guilt*, and *deliver* them from the *wrath* to come.

heart, should neglect to make use of this *divinely-appointed* safeguard? He must inevitably have been punished with the death of his first-born. Equally certain, but infinitely more dreadful, will be *his* condemnation, who, before the omniscient JUDGE, shall presume to plead his own integrity, or confide in his own repentance, and reject the atonement of the dying *JESUS*.

Ther. Now, if you please, for the *sin-offering* *; which seems to have been the most eminent sacrifice of them all.

Asp. It was the most *comprehensive;* because it shadowed forth not only the death of *CHRIST*, but his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven.—As the various actions of some illustrious personage, which cannot be exhibited by the painter in a single draught, are displayed in *several compartments;* yet all constitute one and the same grand *historical picture:* so, these glorious events, incapable of being represented by any *single* animal, were typified by *two kids of the goats;* which nevertheless were reputed but as *one* † offering.

These

* For the circumstances relating to the *sin offering*, the reader will consult *Lev.* xvi.—For those which concern the *paschal lamb*, he will have recourse to *Exod.* xii.

† How runs the divine command? *He* (the high priest) *shall take of the congregation two kids of the goats for a sin-offering*, Lev. xvi. 5 Are not these two kids styled, in the *singular* number and *collective* sense, *an offering?*—That we might not mistake, GOD is pleased to add, *and one ram for a burnt-offering.* Here he names *one*, to prevent a misapprehension of his meaning, when he had before said *two*.—To render his meaning still more apparent, and that we may regard this goat as joined in the *same* offering with the other; the LORD, contrary to his own rule in all other cases, orders the high priest to *lay his hands* upon the head of the *scape-goat*, not upon the head of the goat devoted to death. He *divides* the necessary circumstances of a sacrifice between them *both;* to intimate, in the clearest manner, that neither the one nor the other

These goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle, and there presented before the LORD. *CHRIST* also presented himself before GOD, when *he went up to Jerusalem, that all things written by the prophets concerning him might be accomplished* *.—The goat, on which *the LORD's lot fell*, was devoted to death. *CHRIST* also being delivered by the *determinate counsel and foreknowledge of GOD* †, was crucified and slain.—The body *was burnt without the camp*. Which pointed at the very place, and pictured out the very nature of our LORD's sufferings. For *he suffered without the gate* ‡; was there exposed to the rage of men, and the wrath of GOD; under the most exquisite pains of body, and the most insupportable agonies of soul. All significantly typified by the flame of a devouring *fire*. Than which nothing is more fierce, more penetrating, or more severely tormenting.

As the animal which was *slaughtered*, shewed forth the REDEEMER *dying for our sins;* that which *escaped*, prefigured the same SAVIOUR, *rising again for our justification*.—The high priest put his hands upon the head of the scape-goat, and with great solemnity, *confessed* the sins of the whole congregation. The import of this ceremony is expressly declared in the sacred canon; *The goat shall bear upon him their iniquity* ‖. It is charmingly explained by the prophet, *The*

other *separate*, but both *taken together*, were the one sacrificial oblation, appointed for this distinguished solemnity.

If this be true, I think, the passage is a pretty considerable proof, that *atonement* was made by suffering *vicarious* punishment; notwithstanding what has been urged against it, from the tenth verse of the chapter.—Should we require human authority for the support of this interpretation, one of the greatest human authorities may be seen in the celebrated *Witsius*: *Uterque hircus pertinebat ad unum sacrificium pro peccato, hostiæ unius loco. Uterque erat pecus piacularis, vicaria Israeli peccatori, ejusque peccatum ferens.* De Oecon. lib. IV. cap. vi.

* Luke xviii. 31. † Acts ii. 23. ‡ Heb. xiii. 12.

‖ It is observable, that whereas the scape-goat is said to *bear*

The LORD laid on HIM the iniquity of us all *; and moſt delightfully confirmed by the apoſtle, *He himſelf bore our ſins in his own body on the tree* †.

Thisd one, the goat was diſmiſſed into *a land not inhabited;* a place ſeparated from all reſort of men; where he was never likely to be found any more; to teach us, that our offences, having been expiated by the bleeding *JESUS*, are entirely done away; ſhall never riſe up in judgment againſt us; but, according to the prophecy of *Jeremiah*, *when the iniquity of Iſrael ſhall be ſought for, there ſhall be none; and the ſins of Judah, they ſhall not be found* ‡.—It is farther injoined, that *Aaron ſhall confeſs all the iniquities of the children of Iſrael, and all their tranſgreſſions, in all their ſins. Iniquities, tranſgreſſions, ſins*, are particularized, and, to this cluſter of expreſſions, the word *all* is added; to inform us, that the *leaſt* ſins need the atonement of *CHRIST*'s death; to aſſure us, that the *greateſt* ſins are not beyond the compaſs of its efficacy; and that *all* ſins, be they ever ſo hainous, or ever ſo numerous, are forgiven to the true believer.

The high prieſt carried the blood of the victim into the ſecond tabernacle, even *within the veil.* So *CHRIST entered with his own blood*, not into the holy places made with hands, but *into heaven itſelf* ‖.—The blood was ſprinkled *before* the mercy-ſeat; ſprinkled *upon* the mercy-ſeat; and *left* in the holy of holies, that it might always remain before the LORD. And does not *CHRIST always appear* in the preſence of GOD for us? does he not *ever live* to make interceſſion for us? to plead his all-ſufficient propitiation in our behalf; that the benefits procured thereby, may be communicated, ratified, and perpetuated to his people.

Ther. Theſe benefits *Aſpaſio*, are aſcribed, in ſcripture, to repentance and reformation of life, qualifications

[*] the ſins of *Iſrael*, Lev. xvi. 22.; the very ſame phraſe is applied to *CHRIST*, Iſ. liii. 12.

* Iſ. liii. 6. † 1 Pet. ii. 24. ‡ Jer. l. 20. ‖ Heb. ix. 14.

tions of *our own;* not to any such cause as a vicarious sacrifice; where the merit must necessarily subsist *in another*. What says the apostle *Peter*, when he had just received his instructions from the HOLY GHOST? *Repent and be converted*, not look unto an atonement, or depend upon a propitiation, *that your sins may be blotted out* *.

Asp. 'Tis true, the benefits of the new covenant are promised to penitents, as their *happy portion;* but never assigned to their repentance, as the *procuring cause*. Never to their repentance, but to the blood of the great HIGH PRIEST, called therefore *the blood of the everlasting covenant* †; being the condition stipulated in it, required by it, and in consequence of which, all its unspeakable privileges are bestowed.

Besides, the qualifications you suppose, are the gift of the LORD. We are not able to exercise, till *CHRIST*, who is exalted for this very purpose, *gives* repentance ‡.—A conversion to GOD, and a newness of life, are not the effect of human abilities, but the work of the *divine* SPIRIT, and the fruit of the REDEEMER's death.—Indeed, this death is the purchase of *every* heavenly blessing. This opens the heaven of heavens, and all its inexhaustible stores. By this we have the enjoyment of grace, and by this the hope of glory.

Ther. You begin to be in raptures, *Aspasio!*

Asp. Excuse me, *Theron*. It is not easy to repress the sallies of delight and devotion, when we muse upon such amazing loving-kindness, and are touched with a sense of such immensely-rich benefits.—A great HIGH PRIEST! who is *higher than the heavens* §; yet *humbled* himself to death, even the death of the cross? who is *consecrated for evermore* ‖; and pleads *all* his merit, improves *all* his influence, for *our* consummate felicity!

What

* Acts iii. 19. † Heb. xiii. 20. ‡ Acts v. 31.
§ Heb. vii. 26. ‖ Heb. vii. 28.

What heart of ſtone but glows at thoughts like theſe?
Such contemplations mount us, and ſhould mount
The mind ſtill higher; nor ever glance on man
Unraptur'd, uninflam'd *.

But I check myſelf; and will either reply to your objections, or liſten to your ſentiments; liſten as attentively, as you yourſelf attend to the muſic of that *ſhrill-tongued thruſh.*

Ther. Its ſweetly-modulated lays, eminent even in the ſymphony of ſpring, have indeed attracted my ears. But my mind is diſengaged, and free for your converſation.

Aſp. I can repeat a ſong, ſweeter far than this, or all the melody of the woodland choirs: A ſong, which has harmony enough, to make the brow of *Melancholy* wear a ſmile, or to ſooth away the *ſorrows* of death itſelf. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of GOD's elect? It is GOD that juſtifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died; yea, rather that is riſen again; who is even at the right hand of GOD; who alſo maketh interceſſion for us* †.—— According to my friend's principles, the ſtrain of this triumphant exclamation was ill-judged, and ſhould have run in the following manner: "Who ſhall lay "any thing to our charge? We have endeavoured to "preſerve a rectitude of diſpoſition, and to perſiſt in "a laudable courſe of action. Where-ever we failed, "we have been ſorry for the fault, and have implo"red pardon from the divine MAJESTY. What "then ſhall diſmay us? or who ſhall condemn us?"— *Your* topics of conſolation would be complete, without having recourſe to the *death* of *CHRIST*, as an atonement for ſin; or to the *reſurrection* of *CHRIST*, as an evidence that the atonement is accepted; or to the *interceſſion* of *CHRIST*, as the cauſe of our intereſt in that tranſcendent bleſſing.

Ther.

* Night-Thoughts, N° IV. † Rom. viii. 33, 34.

Ther. Since you so frequently mention, and so earnestly insist upon *atonement*, I should be glad to know the precise signification of the word. I am told, the original phrase has nothing to do with the idea of making satisfaction.

Asp. We may learn the precise signification of atonement, by considering the *means;* the *effect;* and the *manner*, whereby the means accomplish the effect. —The effect of atonement, is *pardon.*—The means of obtaining it, are the *death* of *CHRIST.*—The way or manner, whereby the death of *CHRIST* becomes efficacious for this blessed purpose, is the sovereign *appointment* of his FATHER; the infinite *dignity* of his person; and especially the *vicarious* nature of his sufferings, or their being undergone in the stead of sinners.

Ther. It has been supposed, and is affirmed too, that our SAVIOUR's obedience and death were conducive to our redemption, *only* in virtue of his FATHER's will and appointment.

Asp. I am glad it is some other, and not my *Theron*, who espouses this opinion: which is highly injurious to the *dignity* of our REDEEMER's person, and to the *merit* of his obedience. Neither is it very honourable to the wisdom of the FATHER, unless we suppose him *therefore* to have appointed the death of *CHRIST*, because he knew it was *fully sufficient* for the glorious purpose.

And why should we use that weak inadequate expression, *conducive* to our redemption? Would any one say, of *Solomon*'s elegant and sumptuous temple, that it was conducive to the accomplishment of what *Moses* foretold * ?—*David*'s provision of stones, of timber, and of gold, was, if you please, conducive to it. But *Solomon*'s act was *perfective* of it; was the very execution of the thing itself. Such are the obedience and death of *CHRIST*, with respect to our redemption.

Ther.

* Exod. xv. 7.

Ther. But we forget the original word, and neglect to inquire into its genuine import.

Asp. The word, which we translate *atonement*, implies, in its primary acceptation, the notion of *covering*. Thus the ark was covered *, *was overlaid with pitch, within and without:* that all its chinks might be secured against the insinuating attempts of the water; and all its timber defended from the injuries of the liquid element.—When an object, in this or any other manner, is covered over for safety; the covering *receives* every shock, and *sustains* all damages, which would otherwise fall upon the thing covered. The image, therefore, is very pertinently used, to express the true *evangelical* nature of atonement; and the word is used, with equal propriety, to describe the *mercy-seat* †; which was a costly covering for the ark, made of pure gold, and exactly commensurate to that sacred repository. In this were lodged the tables of the law; whose precepts we have violated, and to whose curse we were subject. Consequently the mercy-seat, both by its situation, its extent, and its office, prefigured the REDEEMER: who interposes between the law and the offender; fulfils the commands, and sustains the curse of the former; merits pardon, and procures salvation for the latter.

As some fine flower; having entertained our eye with one beautiful colour, suddenly breaks, or gradually softens into another; and gives us a renewed pleasure: such, methinks, is the nature of this delightful word.—It is expressive of the *hoar-frost* ‡; which,

* כפרת Thou shalt *besmear, cover*, or *overlay*, Gen. vi. 14. This is the first place, in which our word occurs. It is supposed to give us the genuine and native sense of the phrase.—Perhaps the *English* expression *cover*, may be derived from the participle כפר *copher*.

† כפרת Exod. xxv. 17.

‡ יכפר *Psal.* cxlvii. 16. The idea deduced from *hoar-frost*, is

which, in a ſerene, but ſharp wintry morning, covers the houſes, covers the trees, covers the whole face of nature. So, the blood of *JESUS*, according to the Pſalmiſt's repreſentation, covers * all our guilt, and hides every offence. Inſomuch that, when this blood is applied by the divine SPIRIT, the LORD *ſees no iniquity in Jacob* †. He acts, as if he ſaw none; neither puniſhes the guilty, nor abhors the polluted ſinner.

The ſame expreſſion is uſed with reference to a *covenant*, and ſignifies the *abolition* of the contract ‡; which was done by cancelling the deed, or expunging the articles of ſtipulation.—By the covenant of works, all mankind became obnoxious to condemnation; were bound over to death. By the grace of *CHRIST*, our obligation to puniſhment is diſanulled, and the *hand-writing* of condemnation *is blotted out*.—Should you aſk, *How* this is effected? By paying a ranſom, and offering a ſacrifice. Should you further inquire, Of *what* this ranſom and this ſacrifice conſiſted? Of nothing leſs than the precious blood §, the ineſtimable life ‖, the divinely-magnificent perſon of *CHRIST* ⊥.

Ther-

is not ſo exact and ſtriking, in our northern clime, as in the more ſouthern regions. *There*, the exhalations and dews being more copious, the hoar-froſt muſt fall thicker, lye deeper, and more fully correſpond with the notion of covering.

* Pſal. xxxii. 1. † Numb. xxiii. 21.

‡ Iſ. xxviii. 18. כפר abolebitur. *Proprie ſonat*, oblinetur, obliterabitur, *eſt enim* כפר *Hebræis proprie quid* obducere, *at que inde (cum* obducta *et* oblita *diſpareant)* delere, abolere. (Thus I apprehend, the words ſhould be pointed. According to the preſent punctuation, at leaſt in my edition, I can make out neither ſyntax nor ſenſe.) *Alluditur hoc loco ad fœdera ſcripto comprehenſa, quæ abolentur et irrita fiunt, ſi ſcriptura* inducatur, cancelletur, antiquetur, obliteretur. VITRING. *in loc.*

§ *Not by the blood of goats and calves, but by* his own *blood.* Heb. ix. 12.

‖ *The Son of man came to give* his life *a ranſom for many.* Mark x. 45.

⊥ *Who thro' the eternal SPIRIT offered* himſelf *without ſpot to GOD.* Heb. ix. 14.

Ther. These then are the capital ideas included in the original word, a covering by way of *defence*, and a covering by way of *concealment*.

Asp. They are, *Theron.* As the brain, in the animal body, is the source of sensation; sends out various detachments of nerves, to animate and actuate all the parts of the vital system: so, these two capital ideas branch themselves into a variety of subordinate, yet similar significations; which run thro' the whole œconomy of the gospel, to enliven and quicken the spirit of a believer. Let me instance in a few particulars. This richly-significant word denotes—the exercise of divine mercy *,—the pardon of sin †,—a cleansing from guilt ‡,—purging from transgression §, —reconciliation for iniquity ‖,—the pacifying of wrath ††.—Do not these passages (which are expressed by some branch of the *verb*, that conveys to us the idea of *atoning*) plainly intimate,—that the atonement of *CHRIST* is the meritorious cause of all these desirable effects; is the foundation of *every* act of divine goodness; and the origin of *every* blessing vouchsafed to sinners?

Ther. After all, *this* is the consideration, which principally offends and perplexes me:—GOD is a spirit; an absolutely-perfect and infinitely-pure being; remote, inconceivably-remote, from whatever is gross or corporeal. How then can he take pleasure in the effusion of blood, or the burning of flesh? How can any such *low carnal* inducements make him merciful to sinners; or appease, what you call, his wrath?

Asp. Rather, what the *scriptures* call his wrath.—You mistake our doctrine, my dear *Theron.* We never maintain, that any sacrifice whatever, not even the propitiation of *CHRIST*'s death, was intended to *make*

* Deut. xxxii. 43. † Deut. xxi. 8. 2 Chron. xxx. 18.
‡ Numb. xxxv. 33. § Psal. lxv. 3. ‖ Dan. ix. 24.
†† Ezek. xvi. 63.

make GOD merciful; only to *make way* for his eternal purposes of mercy, without any prejudice either to the demands of his law, or the rights of his justice. —Our sentiments on this head, are exactly consonant to his own *declaration*, and his own *procedure*, in the case of *Job*'s friends *. Tho' displeased with their conduct, he was merciful to their persons. Nevertheless, he would not exercise that mercy, till they had first offered a sacrifice, and acted faith in a dying SAVIOUR.

Neither is it ever supposed, that the infinitely wise and pure GOD can take pleasure in the effusion of blood, or the burning of flesh, *simply* considered; only as they had a reference to that *noble* and *inestimable* sacrifice, which brings the highest honour to his name; which those slaughtered animals exhibited in a figure; and to which every true *Israelite* had a believing regard.

I say, had *a believing regard*. For it is affirmed by the author to the *Hebrews*, that the gospel was preached to the *Israelites* in the wilderness †.—*What* does he mean by the gospel? The very essence of this benevolent scheme, according to the apostle's own definition, is, that *CHRIST died for our sins* ‡.—*How* was this gospel preached to our fathers in the wilderness? By significant emblems; especially by slaughtered animals, and bleeding victims; by which *CHRIST* was *almost continually*, though not *so evidently* as in these latter times, *set forth crucified* || *for sinners*.

In this sense alone, those carnal usages were *worthy* the wisdom of GOD to appoint, and the majesty of GOD to accept.—This gave them a peculiar *dignity* and *importance;* and set them far above all the similar observances used in the Heathen worship.—They were also, when thus explained, thus improved, extremely profitable to believers; as they directed their contemplation to the *future* sufferings of a SAVIOUR,

* *See* Job xlii. 7, 8. † Heb. iv. 2. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 3. || Gal. iii. 1.

OUR, and ratified to their faith the benefits of his *ever-operating* sacrifice: which, we are assured by an infallible voice, was effectual *for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant* *.

Ther. So you apprehend, that, in those usages practised by the ancient *Jews*, the gospel was *emblematically* preached, and *CHRIST* in a *figure* exhibited.

Asp. Most certainly, *Theron.* And for this cause, under the law, *almost all things were purged with blood*†. The multiplicity, the variety, the constancy of their sacrifices, were all designed to impress upon their minds, and familiarize to their thoughts, this great evangelical truth.—Was any one overtaken by a *fault?* He must present

* *Heb.* ix. 15. When I reflect on these words, I wonder how any one can assert, That *all the Jews died under the curse of the law.*—Died under the curse of the law! Even tho' the apostle has warranted it for a truth, that *all these* (meaning *Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob,* &c.) *died in faith.* Heb. xi. 13.—Even tho' he has elsewhere laid it down as a maxim, *So then they which are of faith,* in whatever period of time they live, or under whatever dispensation of religion they worship, *are blessed with faithful Abraham.* Gal. iii. 9.—Even though the Psalmist, in one place, affirms, *Blessed are they whose unrighteousnesses are forgiven, and whose sin is covered:* and in another place, declares concerning himself and his pious contemporaries; *Look how wide the east is from the west! So far hath he set our sins from us,* Psal. xxxii. 1. Psal. ciii. 12.

From these and many other texts, I think, it is evident, that the faithful *Jews* no more died under the curse of the law, than the faithful *Christians.* The death of *CHRIST* procured the *pardon* and *acceptance* of believers, even before he came in the flesh. From the beginning, he had covenanted with the FATHER, as their MEDIATOR; and GOD, to whom all things are present, saw the certain accomplishment of his undertaking. He was therefore, by virtue of the divine decree, and in point of saving efficacy, *a LAMB slain from the foundation of the world.* Though he laid down his life in the reign of *Tiberius*, he was a real REDEEMER in *all ages.*

† Heb. ix. 22.

preſent a victim, and the prieſt muſt ſlay it, by way of *treſpaſs-offering;* to ſignify, that the guilt which was contracted, could be done away only by the atoning death of *CHRIST.*—Had any one received a ſignal *bleſſing?* A beaſt was ſlain by way of *peace-offering;* as a public expreſſion of gratitude for the mercy, and alſo as an emphatical declaration, that all good vouchſafed to fallen man, is owing to the REDEEMER's ranſom.—Was any one to be inveſted with the *prieſtly* office, or admitted to miniſter in the ſanctuary? A ram or a bullock muſt bleed, by way of atonement, and for the purpoſe of conſecration *; in order to teſtify, that no man can officiate with acceptance in the worſhip of GOD; that no ſervice, tho' of a religious kind, can be pleaſing in his ſight; *till* the former is intereſted in the merits, *unleſs* the latter is recommended by the death, of the great HIGH PRIEST.

And not only by their ſolemn ſacrificial acts, but even by their *ordinary* meals, this grand leſſon was inculcated. They were forbidden to eat the blood, in order to awaken and preſerve in their conſciences, a *reverential* and *fiducial* regard to the precious blood of *CHRIST.* The HOLY GHOST, aſſigning a reaſon for this ſacred prohibition, ſays expreſsly, *Becauſe the blood maketh an atonement for your* † *ſouls;* the blood of beaſts typically, the blood of *CHRIST* effectually.—O! that *Chriſtians* would, in this particular, learn of *Jews;* learn, at leaſt, from *Jewiſh* ordinances, to have their attention inceſſantly fixed on that divine HIGH PRIEST; who, *by one offering, hath perfected for ever,*—not barely conduced or contributed to the work; but hath fully accompliſhed it, and obtained complete remiſſion for—*them that are ſanctified* ‡.

Ther. Some offerings were made without any effuſion of blood. What could thoſe mean? Or how could *they* typify the ſacrifice of *CHRIST?*

Aſp.

* Lev. viii. 22. Numb. viii. 12. † Lev. xvii. 11.
‡ Heb. x. 14.

Asp. Perhaps the apostle might foresee such an objection, when he used that guarded expression, *Almost* all things were purged with blood.—If, in these cases, there was no effusion of blood, yet there was a destruction of the substance. The *meat-offerings* were consumed by fire; which is much the same to inanimate things, as shedding of the blood is to living creatures.—The same effect is ascribed to these oblations, as to those of the sanguinary kind. It is expressly declared of the poor man's *trespass-offering*, which consisted of fine flour, and was burnt upon the altar, *It shall make an atonement for him* *.—So that here also was, what we may truly call, a *visible prediction of CHRIST*. The offerings which flamed, as well as the victims which bled, shewed forth our dying LORD: whose "one oblation of himself once offered," comprized all the qualities, and realized the whole efficacy, represented by *every* other sacrifice.

Ther. Another odd circumstance has often given me disgust, and been apt to prejudise me against the institutions of the Old Testament. Many of them appear mean, contemptible, and perfectly *pucrile*. "Can "these," I have said within myself, "be ordained by "a GOD of infinite wisdom, and transcendent glory? Can we reasonably imagine, that a mandate "should be issued from the court of heaven, on purpose to forbid the *boiling*, and injoin the *roasting* †, "of some particular piece of meat?—Will the great "RULER of the skies concern himself about the "precise manner of *killing* one bird, and *releasing* another ‡?—Will he, who claims the worship of the "heart, have such an especial regard to a drop or two "of despicable blood, put upon the *tip* of the *right* "*ear*, or the *thumb* of the *right hand* ‖?—Surely, "such childish ceremonies are too minute and trivial "for the notice, much more for the solemn appointment, of the supreme MAJESTY!"

Asp.

* Lev. v. 11, 12, 13. † Exod. xii. 9. ‡ Lev. xiv. 4, 5, 6, 7. ‖ Exod. xxix. 20.

Asp. You will please to remember, that, when those ceremonies were ordained, it was the *infancy* *, at least the *minority* of the church. If we advert to this circumstance, we shall have reason to admire, both the all-comprehending wisdom, and the no less condescending goodness, of JEHOVAH.—His *all-comprehending wisdom*, in conforming, so accurately and so minutely, the type to the event; though the former was established, long, long before the latter existed. Many ages before the *Desire of nations* appeared, his picture was drawn; was presented to public view; and is now found to correspond, in every feature, with the illustrious original. What hand could be equal to such a task, but only the hand of an omniscient LIMNER?—His *condescending goodness*, in adapting the tenor of his revelation to the state of his people; *speaking unto them, even as unto babes* †: not by naked precepts, or abstracted truths; but by earthly similitudes ‡, and (if I may so express myself) by embodied instructions; such as were level to their low

* St *Paul* calls the church of those times νηπιος, an *infant*, or *babe*, Gal. iv. 1. 3. And the ceremonial institutions have been styled with as much truth as ingenuity, *Evangelium elementare et præliminare.* † 1 Cor. iii. 1.

‡ This seems to be our LORD's meaning, when he says to *Nicodemus, If I have told you earthly things.* He had been treating of that internal spiritual renovation, which is the root and spring of all holiness. He had been speaking of that divine SPIRIT, whose gracious and almighty agency produces this desirable change. The nature of the former was represented, under the similitude of *a birth*; by which we enter upon a new state, form new ideas, and habituate ourselves to new practices, pleasures, pursuits. The operations of the latter were described, by the common and well-known properties of *the wind.*—This he mentions as a plain and familiar method of teaching: this he opposes to *telling him of heavenly things*; or delivering refined and exalted truths, not accommodated to the capacity, not brought within the compass of an infantile understanding, by any assimilation to sensible objects, *John* iii. 12.

low capacities, and calculated to affect their dull apprehensions.

The institutions, to which you hint, were undoubtedly mean and trifling, if considered *in themselves*. Accordingly their wise and majestic AUTHOR cautions his people against such erroneous and unworthy notions. "*I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices* *. "It was not my design, that they should acquiesce in "the shadow, and neglect the substance. I never intended, that they should rest in the porch, but pass "through these ordinances to much sublimer things. "*CHRIST* and spiritual blessings were principally "in my view: to which all the *Mosaical* usages were "relative, subservient, and one continual manuduction."—Considered in this light; as bearing a reference to the ever-blessed MEDIATOR; as emblems of his person, and pledges of his grace; they acquire a real magnificence, and convey the most salutary lessons.

The blood put upon the tip of the ear, and thumb of the hand, denotes our *personal* application of the death of *CHRIST:* without which all its virtue, though boundless and inconceivable, will profit us nothing. Those particular parts of the body, may signify the *perceptive* and *executive* faculties; in both which we offend, and for both which we need the great propitiation.—Of the two birds you mention, one was to be *killed*, the other was to *fly away*, after it had been *dipped* in the blood of its fellow. Thus the *LORD JESUS* was crucified for our sins; and we being *washed* in his blood, being interested in the atonement of our holy victim and elder brother, are acquitted from guilt, and *escape* condemnation.—Concerning the *paschal lamb* it was particularly injoined, That the flesh *should not be eaten raw, nor sodden with water*,

* Jer. vii. 22.

water, but roasted with fire; and of every offering from the herd, or from the flock, the fat and the inwards were, by an express command of GOD, delivered up to the devouring flame. All this was an emblem of that tremendous indignation, which *is poured out like fire* *; which *seized* our immaculate SACRIFICE, that it might *spare* polluted sinners; and which must have consumed utterly any mediator, who was less than infinite, or other than divine.

Had you beheld our renowned *Newton* blowing up, with great assiduity and attention, his little *watery vesicles* into the air; you would, perhaps, have despised the venerable philosopher, and have thought him little better than a *hoary idiot*. But when you was told, that, in every one of these volatile sopy bubbles, he discovered the beauteous *colours* of the *rainbow;* and, from this seemingly-childish experiment, he explained the nature of that wonderful arch; you would then entertain a different notion, both of the man and of his employ.—So, when you discern the blessed *JESUS looking forth at these windows, and shewing himself thro' these lattices* † of the *Jewish* œconomy; you will, I hope, conceive a higher opinion of them, and derive richer advantage from them.

Ther. There are several *persons*, as well as ritual observances, of a very singular character, mentioned in the *Mosaic* law. The *leper*, for instance, the *Nazarite*, with others of the same antiquated and grotesque stamp: which seem, to me at least, so many *unmeaning* narratives, that convey no manner of edification to readers

* Nah. i. 6.

† *Cantic.* ii. 9. The word, in the first edition, is *flourishing through*. It was taken from the *Hebrew*, without consulting the *English* Bible, and is a literal translation of מגיח Which signifies more than barely *shewing himself;* shewing himself with lustre and beauty: like a delicate flower, in its blooming state, and glossy colours: yet flourishing *through lattices;* manifesting himself, not completely, but in part; concealing some, while he reveals much, of his mediatorial glory.

readers in the present age.—I have frequently had an inclination, and now I have a proper opportunity, to ask your opinion upon these points.

Asp. I thank you, *Theron*, for giving me the hint. What you propose, is by no means foreign to the topic of our discourse.—Those persons were truly remarkable; neither are the peculiarities of their case recorded in vain. They picture out, in *dismal* and *delightful* colours, the sinner and the SAVIOUR.—To know ourselves, and to know *CHRIST*, is true wisdom; is indeed the consummation of all knowledge. Here we have a lecture of hieroglyphical instruction, on both these important subjects.

The *leper* * was an emblem of a *sinner*.—His disease extremely-afflictive to himself, and intolerably-loathsome to others. Sin likewise is the *sorest* of all miseries, to the wretch who commits it; and most *detestably*-odious to the GOD who forbids it.—The leper was secluded from the *benefits* of *society*, and all communication with his fellow-citizens. The sinner also, while impenitent and unpardoned, is an *alien* from the commonwealth of *Israel* †; without any enjoyment of the comforts, or any interest in the privileges of the gospel. If he dies in this condition, he must be for ever *shut out* from the kingdom of heaven; for ever *cut off* from the presence of the LORD.

The contagion was sometimes so *pestilent*, that it not only tainted the cloaths of the diseased, but spread itself over the walls of his house, and infected the timber of the beams. It was sometimes so *inveterate*, that it could be eradicated no other way, but by burning the garment, and demolishing the building. Does not this give us a clear, but melancholy view, of *original* corruption? which has transfused its poison through all the faculties of the soul, and all the members of the body; nor will ever be *entirely* expelled, till death releases the former, and consigns the latter to the dust.

What

* cc Lev. chap. xiii. xiv. † Eph. ii. 12.

What could cure this terrible diſtemper, even in its *mildeſt* ſtate? Not all the balm of *Gilead;* not all the drugs on a thouſand hills; nothing but the *conſecrated* oil and *ſacrificial* blood, duly applied by the high prieſt. And what can heal the diſorders of our fallen ſouls? ſo far heal them, as to purge away their guilt, and ſubdue the prevalence of their iniquities? No acts of mortification, no vigilance, nor any efforts of our own; nothing but the *atoning* death, and *ſanctifying* SPIRIT of the bleſſed *JESUS*. The malignity and virulence of this plague of the heart, are abſolutely incorrigible by any other expedient. But bleſſed be divine grace, this remedy, provided by our great HIGH PRIEST, and adminiſtered by our great PHYSICIAN, is *ſovereign* and *never fails*.

The caſe of the *Nazarites* * was the very reverſe of the ſtate of the *lepers*. *Her Nazarites*, Jeremiah ſays, *were purer than ſnow, they were whiter than milk; they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their poliſhing was of ſapphires* †. A faint repreſentation of the only begotten SON, who is *the faireſt among ten thouſand;* the brightneſs of his FATHER's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon; both GOD and man in one ſacred, wonderful, adorable SAVIOUR.—*They*, during the time of their ſeparation, abſtained from wine; withdrew from ſecular buſineſs; avoided every kind of pollution; and dedicated themſelves, in an eſpecial manner, to the ſervice of GOD. A type of that *glorious NAZARITE*, who was ſeparated, for a ſeaſon, from the fruitions of heaven; who was holy, harmleſs, and undefiled, both in his nature and all his converſation; who ſanctified himſelf, and devoted his life and labours, his ſoul and body, to the glory of his FATHER, and the redemption of his people.—The *Nazarites*, even when they had diſcharged their vow, and were ceremonially clean, yet were obliged to offer a *ſin-offering*, a *burnt-offering*, and a *peace-offering*,

* *See* Numb. chap. vi. † Lam. iv. 7.

ing. So, the great REDEEMER, though he had *perfectly obeyed* all the preceptive parts of the divine law, yet was required to offer up a ſacrifice,—even the *incomparably-precious* ſacrifice of himſelf,—in order to conſummate the work of our ſalvation.

Ther. Have you a ſufficient warrant for this ſtrain of interpretation? Is it *ſound*, is it *rational*, or conformable to any *authentic* ſtandard of ſcriptural expoſition? Methinks, it looks more like the child of fancy, than the offspring of judgment; more like the ſally of a ſportive imagination, than the reſult of a ſober diſquiſition.

You cannot be ignorant, *Aſpaſio*, how the ruling paſſion tinctures the whole conduct. Hence it is, I apprehend, that your *religious inamoratoes* find heavenly beauties, where ſcripture intended no more than natural truths. Hence it is, that they turn plain facts into profound figures, and allegorize *common ſenſe* into *pious abſurdity*.—Have you never ſeen the *myſtic* interpretations of ſome ancient, and, I may add, ſome modern divines? The honeſty of their deſign is tranſparent, and the piety of their lives is unqueſtionable; otherwiſe we ſhould be tempted to ſuſpect, that they meant to burleſque the ſcriptures, and diſgrace their author.

Who can ever perſuade himſelf, that the ſupremely-wiſe GOD, would ſend us to ſearch for a *body* of *divinity*, in a *bundle* of *rods*? or ſet us to ſpin all the myſteries of Chriſtianity, from a few fleeces of wool, *ring-ſtreaked*, *ſpeckled*, and *ſpotted* *? Thus to expound the ſcriptures, is, not to open them clearly, and apply them judiciouſly, but rather to whip them into froth †.

Aſp. We have the authority of our LORD himſelf;

* Gen. xxxi.

† *Luther* uſed to call ſuch far-fetched and unnatural allegories, *ſpumam ſcripturæ*.

ſelf; who has informed us,—That the *brazen ſerpent* lifted up in the wilderneſs *, was figurative of his own ſuſpenſion and death on the croſs:—That the *temple*, built on mount *Sion*, was typical of his immaculate body, in which dwelt all the fulneſs of the GOD-HEAD†:—That the prophet *Jonah*, lodged in the belly of the whale, and diſcharged from that ſtrange confinement, on the third day ‡, was an emblem of his own deſcending into the grave, and riſing again before his fleſh ſaw corruption.

We have alſo the teſtimony and the practice of the chiefeſt of the apoſtles, for our warrant. He aſſures us, that the *rock* ſmitten by *Moſes*, had a reference to *CHRIST* §; who was wounded for our ſins, and is the foundation of our hopes: That the *waters;* iſſuing at the ſtroke, were ſignificative of thoſe ſpiritual bleſſings, which flow from a crucified SAVIOUR: That, as the former *followed* the ſons of *Jacob*, thro' all the circumvolutions of their tedious journey; the latter accompany the diſciples of *JESUS*, in every ſtage of their earthly pilgrimage.—Let the great teacher of the *Gentiles* be our expoſitor, and we ſhall ſee the *veil* of the *temple* dignified with a ſignificancy, richer far than its coſtly materials, and curious workmanſhip. Its ſilk and embroidery exhibit, to the eye of faith, the pure and ſpotleſs fleſh of *CHRIST* ‖. As, by rending the material veil, the holy of holies became *viſible* and *acceſſible;* ſo, by piercing the body, and ſpilling the blood of *CHRIST*, the GOD of heaven was *manifeſted*, and the way to heaven *opened*.

Every reader muſt admire thoſe *divided waves;* which, inſtead of overwhelming the *Iſraelites* with a reſiſtleſs deluge, ſtood like a wall of defence on their right hand, and on their left, as they marched thro' the depths of the ſea.—Every reader muſt admire that *ſuſpended cloud*, which ſpread itſelf like a ſpacious canopy

* John iii. 14. † John ii. 19, 21. Col. ii. 9.
‡ Matth. xii. 39, 40. § 1 Cor. x. 4. ‖ Heb. x. 20.

nopy over the hosts of *Israel;* and screened them from the annoying sun-beams, as they passed through the sultry desert.—Our admiration must be heightened, when we find *that* which was a cloud by day, becoming a *pillar* of *fire* by night; and illuminating their camp with the most amazing, as well as the most chearing splendor.—But St *Paul* discerned a greater glory, and a deeper design, in these unparalleled events. The people, he says, *were baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea* *. These symbollically represented the baptism *of water* and *of fire;* or the application of *CHRIST*'s blood to our souls, and the efficacy of his SPIRIT on our hearts. In the former of which, consists our justification; from the latter of which, proceeds our sanctification.

I fear, you will think my discourse somewhat like the journey just now mentioned; but I must not wholly omit the epistle to the *Hebrews;* which is the most unexceptionable vindication, as well as the faultless model, of allegorical exposition.—It is delightful to observe, what propriety of address the inspired writer uses. He speaks to the *Jews*, in *their own* way; alludes to their own usages, ordinances, and ceremonies; proves them to be types of, and guides to, a more clear, a more benign, and in all respects a more excellent † œconomy. More particularly he displays the

* 1 Cor. x. 2.

† He styles the legal oblations, and indeed the whole service of the *Jewish* sanctuary, *the example and shadow of heavenly things;* or of *CHRIST JESUS*, and *evangelical* worship, and *spiritual* blessings, *Heb.* viii. 5.—τυπος, *the pattern:* somewhat like the strokes, pencilled out upon a piece of fine linen; which present you with the figure of sprigs, of leaves, and of flowers; but have not yet received their splendid colours, their curious shades, and beautiful enrichments, from the labours of the needle.—σκια, *a shadowy representation;* which gives you some dim and imperfect idea of the body; but not the fine features, not the distinguishing air, none of those living graces, which adorn the real person.—Yet both the pattern

the *transcendent superiority* of *CHRIST* and his gifts, even to those persons and privileges, which they held in the *highest* esteem. These, like the morning-star, were introductory to, yet totally eclipsed by, the rising sun.

They had exalted apprehensions of the *angelic* excellencies. The apostle therefore celebrates the REDEEMER, as the LORD whom angels obey, as the GOD whom angels adore.—They always reckoned *Moses* to be the *first favourite* of heaven, and chief among the children of men. He lets them know, that *Moses*, with all his extraordinary endowments, was but a *servant* in the house of *JESUS*. It was his greatest honour, to minister unto this Prince of Peace. —As the priesthood and sacrifices were some of their distinguishing privileges; he shews the pre-eminence of *CHRIST*'s office to all the *Aaronic* orders. He demonstrates the extensive and everlasting efficacy of *his one* atonement, in preference to every form, and the *whole series* of *Levitical* oblations.

Ther. Thus interpreted, I must acknowledge, the book of *Levitical* ceremonies is *significant* and *edifying*. Whereas, abstracted from this evangelical improvement, nothing can be more empty and jejune. I once thought, that, to peruse those obsolete canons, was like sitting down to an entertainment of dry bones. But, if such be their import, they may yield marrow and fatness to the attentive mind.

Due care, however, should be taken, not to suppose a type, where there is no *apparent* foundation of analogy in the thing itself; or no *hint* of this nature given us by the unerring SPIRIT; lest, instead of being guided by truth, we are bewildered by fancy.—And, when either or both these handles present themselves, I think, we should beware of straining the subject

pattern and the shadow lead our minds to something nobler than themselves. The pattern, to that which *completes* it; the shadow, to that which *occasions* it.

ject beyond the bounds of a *just* and *reasonable* comparison: left, instead of following the clue, we stretch it till it breaks.—If the first caution is not observed, the sense of scripture will lye so deep, or be removed to such a distance, that none but persons of the most *acute* discernment can find it, or none but persons of the most *excursive* imagination can reach it. If the second is not regarded, the meaning of those divine volumes will become so *vague* and *volatile*, that there will hardly remain any possibility of ascertaining or fixing it.

Asp. As to the expedience and necessity of these cautionary limitations, I have the pleasure of agreeing entirely with my friend.—Let our fancy submit to the reins of judgment, otherwise her excursions will be *wild* and *lawless*. Let our zeal borrow the eyes of discretion, otherwise her efforts will be *blind* and *extravagant*. And let all, thus tempered, thus regulated, be under the influence of enlightening grace. *Then*, to spiritualize the ancient scriptures, will be to convert the stones of the sanctuary into the jewels of a crown; and to fetch, not water only, but milk and honey from the flinty rock.

Then, how pleasing must it be, as well as instructive, to discover the blessed *JESUS*, in all the institutions of the *Mosaic* law! To see his *incarnation* prefigured by the feast of *tabernacles* *, when the *Israelites* were to relinquish their houses, and lodge in booths. Even as the SON of GOD left the bosom of his FATHER, and the seats of bliss, to inhabit a cottage of clay, and sojourn in a veil of tears.—To see our spotless and divine VICTIM, typically slain at the joyful solemnity of the *passover*, and the anniversary fast of *expiation*.—To see his *death*, that inestimable ransom for our souls, presented to our faith, in every morning and evening *sacrifice* †: his *intercession*, that prevailing recommendation of our prayers, most sweetly

* Lev. xxiii. 34, 40, 42. † Exod. xxix. 38, 39.

ſweetly expreſſed by the rich *incenſe*, which attended the ſacred rite.—To ſee the various methods of *purification*; ſome pointing at the *fountain* * for ſin and for uncleanneſs, opened in our REDEEMER's bleeding heart; others referring to thoſe ſanctifying operations of the SPIRIT, which act *as a refiner's fire* †, *or as fuller's ſoap*.—To ſee, in the *city of refuge* ‡, that perfect ſecurity, which *CHRIST*'s meritorious ſufferings in our ſtead, afford to every penitent and believing ſinner.

Was it ſo very affecting and ſo very encouraging to *Æneas*, when he beheld the ſtory of the *Trojan* heroes, pictured upon the walls of the *Carthaginian* temple ‖? How much greater encouragement and joy muſt ariſe in the Chriſtian's breaſt, when he perceives the amiable lineaments of his everlaſting FRIEND, *pourtrayed* in all the peculiarities of the *Jewiſh* worſhip, and in the moſt diſtinguiſhing events of the *Jewiſh* hiſtory! This muſt highly ennoble the Bible, and inexpreſſibly endear it to our affections. This ſpreads *luſtre*, *life*, and *glory*, through every page of that bleſſed book.—And though I would forbear indulging what might be called a pious wantonneſs of imagination; yet I ſhould much rather chuſe, in expounding the ſcriptures, to ramble with *Auguſtine*, than err with *Grotius*: ſee, or think I ſee my SAVIOUR, even where it may not, perhaps, be eaſy to make out the traces of his dignity, to the ſatisfaction of a rigorous inquirer; rather than ſhut my eyes upon the diſplay of his perfections, when they beam forth with the moſt inviting beauty.

Ther. How ſoon is this walk finiſhed! How imperceptibly has the time ſtole away!—Theſe *garden-gates* I always uſed to approach with a particular complacency. They ſeemed to afford me a *welcome retreat* from the

* Exod. xxix. 4. Pſal. li. 7. † Numb. xxxi. 23.
Iſ. iv. 4. ‡ Numb. xxxv. 11, 12. ‖ VIRG. Æn. I.

the impertinence and vanity of the world. Now, methinks, I enter them with reluctance, because they are likely to put a period to this agreeable conversation.—However, as my *Aspasio* enters with me, I am reconciled, I am satisfied. It will be in his power to restore the pleasure, which must now be interrupted. And this is what I shall ere long request; because I have not spoke my whole mind upon the present subject.

Asp. Whenever you think proper, *Theron*. This is, to me, a *favourite* subject; and not to me only, but to incomparably better judges.—The man, who had been caught up into the third heavens, and seen the visions of GOD, determined to know *nothing* but *JESUS CHRIST* and him *crucified* *.—At the grandest assembly, that ever was convened on earth, this furnished the *principal*, if not the *only* topic of conversation.—And in that world, where the voice of joy and thankfgiving is perpetually heard, this constitutes the *burden* of the song, *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood* †.

* 1 Cor. ii. 2. † Rev. 5. 9.

DIALOGUE IV.

Ther. I MUST now desire my *Aspasio* to inform me, *what* that grand assembly was, (which he mentioned in the close of our last discourse,) and *where* convened?

Asp. Can't you guess, *Theron?*—Was it in the plains of *Thessaly*, when *Xerxes* drew together the forces of more than half the known world, and appeared at the head of all the potentates of the east?—Was it in the *Roman* forum, when the senators were assembled in their robes, and the barbarians took them for a synod of gods?—No; it was on the mount of *Transfiguration*; where the SON of the true GOD, the LORD

LORD of eternal glory, ſhone forth in ſome of his *celeſtial* and *native* ſplendor; with garments white as the ſnow *, and a countenance bright as the ſun: where he converſed with two of his moſt diſtinguiſhed ſaints, juſt come down from the regions of bliſs and immortality: with *Moſes* the great deliverer of the law, and with *Elijah* the reſolute reſtorer of its honours: where he was attended by three of his *principal* ambaſſadors, who were to be the reformers of mankind, and the lights of the world.

This, I think, is the moſt venerable and auguſt aſſembly, that the annals of hiſtory have recorded. And what was the *topic* of *converſation*, among theſe illuſtrious perſonages?—Not the affairs of ſtate, nor the revolutions of empire; not the curious refinements of literature, nor the wonderful diſcoveries of philoſophy; but the *ignominious* and *bloody* exit†, which the divine *JESUS* was ſoon to make at *Jeruſalem*.—This circumſtance, methinks, ſhould recommend the ſubject to our frequent diſcourſe; even tho' it was leſs eminent, for intrinſic dignity, and comfortable import.

Talking in this manner, they arrive at the *park*; which, the moment you enter, fills the view with its bold, enlarged, and magnificent ſweep.—It was diver-

* *Mark* ix. 3. The evangeliſt's deſcription is, like the ſcene, *remarkably bright*; and the *gradation* of his images is *almoſt* as worthy of obſervation, as the memorable fact.—The garments were *white*,—*exceeding* white,—white *as the ſnow*, whiter than any *fuller* on earth could make them;—ſurpaſſing all the works of *art*, equalling the firſt and fineſt productions of *nature*.—Nay, ſo great was the luſtre, that it *gliſtered* (ἐξαστράπτοντα) like the lightning, and even dazzled the ſight.

† Does not this very delicately, yet very ſtrongly intimate, that the ſufferings and death of *CHRIST* were the principal end of the *Moſaic* inſtitutions, and the principal ſubject of the *prophetic* teachings? For is it not natural to ſuppoſe, that *Moſes* and *Elijah* intended, when miniſtering on earth, that very thing, which their converſation dwelt upon, when they deſcended from heaven?

ſified with level and riſing ground. Here ſcooped into mimic amphitheatres; with the *deer* pendent on the little ſummit, or ſhooting down the eaſy precipice: there raiſed into gentle hillocks; ſome of which were *canopied* with a large, ſpreading, ſolitary oak; others were *tufted* with a cluſtre of tapering and verdant elms. Two or three *caſcades*, gleaming from afar, as they poured along the ſlanting rock, or the graſſy ſlope, gave a pleaſing variation to the proſpect; while they ſtartled the timorous unexperienced fawns, with their foaming current, and watery roar.—*Grandeur* and *ſimplicity* ſeemed to be the genius of the place. Every thing breathed an air of noble negligence, and artleſs majeſty.

In the centre of all, roſe a curious *romantic mount*.—Its form was exactly round; ſomewhat like a ſugar-loaf, lopt off a little below the point.—Not coeval with nature, but the work of human induſtry. Thrown up, 'tis ſuppoſed, in thoſe perilous times, when *Britain* was alarmed by foreign invaſions, or bled with inteſtine wounds.—It was covered, all around, with alder-ſhrubs: whoſe ranks, gradually ariſing, and ſpreading ſhade above ſhade, compoſed a kind of *woody theatre*; through which were ſtruck two or three *ſpiral walks*; leading, by a gentle aſcent, and under embowering verdure, to the ſummit.—At proper intervals, and on every ſide of the hill, were formed little *arborets*; with apertures, cut through the boughs, to admit a proſpect of the country.—In one or other of theſe leafy boxes, you command, at every hour of the day, either the enlivening ſun, or the refreſhing ſhade.—All along the circling avenues, and all around the beauteous reſts, ſprung daffodils, primroſes, and violets; which, mingling with hyacinths and cowſlips, compoſed many a charming piece of *natural moſaic*.

How agreeable, as they climb and wind themſelves round the hill, to reflect on the *happy change* which has now taken place!—Where ſteely helmets gleamed,

or brazen ſhields claſhed, the *goldfinches* twitter their loves, and diſplay their painted plumes. The dens of rapine, or the horrid haunts of bloodſhed, are become the retreats of calm contemplation, and friendly converſe.—In yonder lower ſpaces, where the armed troops were wont to patrol; from whence they made excurſions, to ravage the villages, or terrify the ſwains; the *fallow-deer* trip lightly, or the *full-headed ſtags* ſtand at bay.

From a ſmall eminence, but at a conſiderable diſtance, guſhed a couple of ſprings; which, rambling thro' a grove, loſt one another in the ſhady labyrinth. Emerging, at length, from the gloom, they approached nearer and nearer, and fell into embraces at the foot of this hill. They rolled, in amicable conjunction, along the pebbly channel, which encircles its baſis; and added their *ſober melody* to the *ſprightly warbling* of the birds.—Flowing off in one common ſtream, they formed the fine pieces of water, which beautified the park. From thence, they ſtole into the meadow, and widened into a *river*. There, enamoured as it were with each other, they glide by wealthy towns, and ſweep thro' flowery vales; regardleſs of the *blooming toys* which deck the one, and of the *noiſy crouds* which throng the other.

So, ſaid *Aſpaſio*, may *Theron* and his *Selina*, pleaſing and pleaſed with each other, paſs thro' the buſy and the amuſing ſcenes of life; neither *captivated* by the one, nor *anxious* for the other. With ſuch harmonious agreement, and indiſſoluble union, may they purſue the courſe, marked out by Providence; their happineſs *increaſing*, and their uſefulneſs *enlarging*, as they draw nearer the ocean of all good! Then, parted by a gentle ſtroke of fate, like the waters of ſome ample ſtream *ſevered* by the piers of an intervening bridge, may they ſpeedily *reunite!*—reunite in conſummate bliſs, and never be ſeparated more!

Ther.

Ther. I thank you, *Aſpaſio*, for your affectionate compliment. Nor can I wiſh you, by way of return, a greater recompenſe, than the continual exerciſe of ſuch a *benevolent* temper. For to exerciſe benevolence, is to enjoy the moſt refined and exalted pleaſure; ſuch as makes the neareſt approaches to the felicity of the eternal mind; who, as the ſcripture moſt beautifully ſpeaks, *has pleaſure in the proſperity of his ſervants.*

But while we are ſeated on this mount, our ſituation reminds us of (what you juſt now mentioned) the grand conference relating to the death of *CHRIST:* —A buſineſs, for which you have indeed accounted; but in a manner that may be thought not the *moſt honourable* to the divine attributes.

Aſp. I have repreſented it as a *ranſom* for our ſouls, and a *ſacrifice* for our ſins. If you diſapprove my account, be pleaſed to favour me with your own.—For what purpoſe, according to *your* opinion, did that ever-bleſſed PERSON die?

Ther. To confirm the *truth* of his doctrine, and leave us a *pattern* of the moſt perfect reſignation.

Aſp. And is this all? Shall we thus impoveriſh the riches of grace?—Was this notion *defenſible*, it could never be *deſirable*. But it has as little to ſupport it as it has to recommend it.—For, upon ſuch a ſuppoſition, where is the *difference* between the death of *CHRIST*, and the death of the martyrs? *They* confirmed the truth of the goſpel. In *their* ſufferings was obedience and reſignation; the ſame in quality, tho' not in degree.—Upon ſuch a ſuppoſition, what *benefit* could the ancient patriarchs receive from the REDEEMER? ſince none could be improved by the example of his patience, or the pattern of his obedience, till they were actually exhibited.—Or how could *CHRIST* be ſtyled *the Lamb ſlain from the beginning of the world* * ? the advantages of whoſe death, commenced

* Rev. xiii. 8.

ced from the very beginning, as they will be prolonged even to the end of time.

Not to depend on conſequential arguments, let us hear the *expreſs* declaration of our divine MASTER himſelf: *This is my blood, which is ſhed*—for what? To give credibility to my goſpel, or yield an example of entire reſignation? Rather—*for the remiſſion of ſins* *. Will any one attempt to make the remiſſion of ſins, and the propoſal of a pattern, or the ratification of a doctrine, *ſynonymous* terms?—They who can torture and tranſmute the genuine ſenſe of words, at this extraordinary rate, may *metamorphoſe* any expreſſion into any meaning.

If then we would conſider our LORD's death in its *due amplitude*, we muſt conſider it, both as a pattern of piety, and as a ranſom for ſinners. We muſt neither ſeparate nor confound theſe very diſtinct, yet very conſiſtent effects.

Ther. Is it not inconſiſtent with the acknowledged principles of juſtice, that the *innocent* ſhould be puniſhed, inſtead of the offender?

Aſp. If the innocent perſon has an *abſolute* power over his own life; *willingly* ſubſtitutes himſelf in the place of the guilty; and, by his vicarious ſufferings, fully anſwers all the purpoſes of a *righteous* government;—in this caſe, which was the caſe with our LORD, I ſee not the leaſt repugnancy to the rules of juſtice.

The Bible, that authentic tranſcript of the counſels of heaven, avows; and, by avowing, vindicates the practice. *The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all* †. When all we like ſheep had gone aſtray, and were

* Matth. xxvi. 28.

† *Iſ.* liii. 6. הפגיע בו *made to meet*, or *fall upon*, in an hoſtile, vindictive manner; with a deſign to take vengeance, or inflict death; as an armed man falls upon his enemy, or a fierce lion on the helpleſs lamb. This is by far the moſt uſual ſignification of the phraſe.

I could

were exposed to the stroke of vengeance, as those wandering creatures to the ravenous beast; the good SHEPHERD interposed, and the just GOD made that vengeance to fall upon him, which must otherwise have been executed upon us. *He suffered*, says another inspired

I could not observe, without surprise and sorrow, the late attempt of a learned writer, to interpret away the force and spirit of this text. He says, "The word we translate *hath* "*laid* is the same that we render *meet*, Exod. xxiii. 4. *If* "*thou* meet *thine enemy's ox or ass going astray, thou shalt* "*surely bring them back to him again.* And the meaning is, "By him the LORD hath *caused to meet*, and *stop the iniqui-* "*ties* of us all, wherein we have wandered from him."

To this I might object, that, tho' the *verb* is the same, the *construction* is by no means parallel. The prefix ב occurs in one case, is omitted in the other.—I might farther inquire, whether the language be conformable to the laws of *grammar*, and such as sufficiently expresses what I suppose is intended, "The "LORD caused our iniquities to be met, and to be stopped."—But these particulars I wave, and shall only examine, whether the *sense* is suitable to scripture. According to this gentleman's idea, the prophet's doctrine is as follows: "Our sins "were running away, like a stray sheep, or like a wandering "ox. But they were met by *CHRIST*, who graciously turned "them back, and restored them to their rightful owner."—"To avoid this glaring impropriety, our author has added a "kind of salvo; "to turn *us* back to himself, who is the "SHEPHERD of souls." But this is to depart from the prophet's subject, who is speaking not of *us*, but of *our iniquities*. This is to depart from the tenor of *his own* explication. If he adheres to the clue, which he borrows from the book of *Exodus*, what I have represented, is the unavoidable consequence.

See! to what wretched shifts, dishonourable to the word of GOD, and even to the art of criticism, *they* must have recourse, who refuse to acknowledge the *real substitution* of *CHRIST* in our stead, and the *proper atonement* made by his death!—How much more like a true critic, and like a true Christian, has *Vitringa* explained the passage! *Cum nos instar ovium dispersarum essemus in erroribus, et pœna criminum nostrorum, instar lupi aut bestiæ voracis, nos persequeretur ad exitium: intervenit servus* JEHOVÆ *justis, qui illam pœnam*

in

inſpired writer, *the juſt for the unjuſt* *, *that*, by expiating our guilt, *he might bring us to GOD*, now to his gracious favour, hereafter to his bliſsful preſence.

You will permit me to add a paſſage, from our common favourite *Milton:* becauſe it is no leſs beautiful in itſelf, than it is pertinent to the occaſion; muſt pleaſe the critic, and may expound the apoſtle. —*MESSIAH*, pleading in behalf of fallen man, thus addreſſes his Almighty FATHER:

> ———*Man, dead in ſins and loſt,*
> *Atonement for himſelf, or offering meet*
> *(Indebted and undone!) hath none to bring.*
> *Behold me then! me for him! life for life*
> *I offer. On me let thine anger fall.*
> *Account me man: I for his ſake will leave*
> *Thy boſom, and this glory next to thee*
> *Freely put off; and for him laſtly die*
> *Well-pleas'd; on me let Death wreak all his rage* †.

Ther. The fine imagination of a poet, will hardly paſs for a deciſive argument. When we are ſearching after truth, we muſt attend to the dictates of *reaſon*, not follow the vagaries of *fancy*. And Reaſon, *Aſpaſio*, remonſtrates againſt your notion of a vicarious ſacrifice: Reaſon! that primary guide, and final teſt, both in diſcovering and determining the ſenſe of ſcripture.

Aſp. Suppoſe you then, my dear *Theron*, that none are in poſſeſſion of reaſon, but the pupils of *Socinus*, and the zealots for *Deiſm*? or that none make uſe of reaſon, in their religious inquiries, but men of this mould?

> *Wrong not the Chriſtian, think not reaſon yours;*
> *'Tis* reaſon *our great* MASTER *holds ſo dear;*
> *'Tis*

in ſe ſuſcepit; in quam irruit ad necem uſque; quique adeo medius inter pœnam et nos, eandem pœnam tulit, et nos ab exitio vindicavit.

* 1 Pet. iii. 18. † MILTON, book III. 233.

'Tis reaſon's *injur'd rights his wrath reſents;*
'Tis reaſon's *voice obey'd his glories crown.*
Through reaſon's *wounds alone thy* faith *can die* *.

Poets, you ſee, are far from diſclaiming Reaſon. Equally far is Chriſtianity from diſcarding the *ſober*, the *ſanctified* uſe of this noble faculty. When reaſon is under the influence and direction of the divine SPIRIT, we have the ſame high opinion of her excellence, as yourſelf. And, when thus regulated, we have, I am perſuaded, the ſanction of her authority, for all our ſentiments.

Reaſon, as ſhe operated in the ſages of the Heathen world, inſtead of rejecting, approved and adopted this very ſcheme; approved it, even under the diſadvantage of a mutilated and defective, or rather of a perverted and dead form. The current language of the claſſic authors, and almoſt every hiſtorian of *Greece* and *Rome*, are vouchers for the truth of this obſervation †.—As the *Gentiles* were unanimous in the cuſtom of offering ſacrifices, and equally unanimous in ſuppoſing their vicarious nature, ſo alſo are the *Jewiſh* writers.

Ther. What man of ſenſe pays any regard to the *Jewiſh* writers? Legendary they are, and extravagant to the laſt degree. Dotards I might call them, rather than writers.

Aſp. They are, I believe, extravagant enough in their comments upon ſcripture. But they relate, with ſufficient exactneſs and fidelity, the *prevailing belief* of their nation. In this caſe, their teſtimony is as unexceptionable, as, in the other, their notions are chimerical.—Now, had it been a miſtaken belief, ſurely our bleſſed LORD, that *infallible* Judge, and *impartial* Reprover, would have teſtified his diſapprobation of it. Surely his diſciples, who were actuated by the *unerring* and *undaunted* ſpirit of their MASTER, would

* Night-Thoughts, N° IV.
† *See the note, in* Dialogue III. *page* 82.

would have entered their proteſt againſt it. Surely St *Paul*, in his epiſtle to that very people, and in his treatiſe on that very ſubject, would have ſet himſelf to rectify ſuch an error; and have weeded out the tares, before he ſowed the good ſeed. But there is not the leaſt hint of this kind, in all the diſcourſes of our SAVIOUR, or in all the writings of his apoſtles.

They ſpeak to a people, who were accuſtomed to look upon their ſacrifices as piacular oblations *, and a typical expiation of guilt. They ſpeak of our REDEEMER's crucifixion, and the benefits of his death, in the ſacrificial terms, that were of *current* uſe, and *eſtabliſhed* ſignification. If therefore the popular opinion was improper, their manner of expreſſion and addreſs muſt be calculated rather to authenticate error, than to propagate truth.—So that, I think, even the *ſilence* of the inſpired penman on this occaſion, is but little inferior to a *loud* atteſtation. Did they only ſay nothing *againſt* the doctrine of ſatisfaction by ſacrifice; it would in effect, and circumſtances conſidered, be ſaying abundance *for* it.—But they are very copious and explicit upon the point.

Ther. Where are they ſo copious; If you have ſuch a heap of their allegations, it will be eaſy to pick out a few, and give us a ſpecimen.

Aſp. It is as eaſy, *Theron*, as it is delightful.—*MESSIAH ſhall be cut off*, ſays the prophet *Daniel*, *but not for himſelf* †.—For whom then, and for what? *Iſaiah* informs us concerning both: *For the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtricken* ‡.—Becauſe this is an article of the laſt importance, it is repeated, it is confirmed, it is explained, with the moſt remarkable particularity: *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions; he was bruiſed for our iniquities; the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed* ‖.—Our LORD himſelf

* This, I think, is inconteſtably proved by *Outram*, in his treatiſe *de ſacrificiis*.

† Dan. ix. 26. ‡ Iſ. liii. 8. ‖ Iſ. liii. 5.

himself asserts the same truth in the very same style; *I am the good shepherd, and lay down my life for the sheep**. St *Paul*, in a *multitude* of passages, sets his seal to this momentous doctrine.—St *Peter* maintains it, in very *forcible* words; *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree* †.

The sacred writers not only assert this capital article, but use every diversity of speech, in order to give it the *fullest* evidence, and the *strongest* establishment. *He made* reconciliation *for the sins of the people* ‡. *JESUS CHRIST the righteous is the* propitiation *for our sins* ‖. *He loved us, and* washed *us from our sins in his own blood* ⊥. *He was* made sin *for us, though he knew no sin* §.

Ther. No body makes any objection to these texts. But the sense, the *true sense* of such phrases, is the thing in question.

Asp. What you call *the question*, to me appears so plain, as not to want a decision, or admit of a doubt.

However, since you seem to demand a *critical scrutiny*, it will not be thought pedantic, if I make an observation or two upon the original languages; or rather, as you are not acquainted with the *Hebrew*, on that language, of which you yourself are a judge and a master.

If one died for all, then were all dead. The preposition υπερ, in this connection, must necessarily signify more than "on our account, or for our advantage."* Because, if it be taken in this unsettled rambling sense, the apostle's argument is vague and inconclusive.—In case our LORD had suffered, only "to free us from "some

* John x. 15.

† 1 *Pet.* ii. 24. Very forcible words indeed.—ος—αυτος—αμαρτιας ημων—εν τω σωματι αυτου—*He bare—himself bare—our sins—in his own body:* intended, one would imagine, to make the article of our LORD's vicarious sufferings *clear* beyond all misapprehension, and *sure* beyond all doubt.

‡ Heb. ii. 17. ‖ 1 John ii. 2. ⊥ Rev. i. 5. § 2 Cor. v. 21.

"some evil, and procure us some benefit;" this would by no means imply, that *all were dead*, under the sentence of condemnation, obnoxious and doomed to death *. The utmost you can infer from such premises, is, that all stood in need of a deliverance from some evil, or wanted the procurement of some good. Whereas, suppose the sacred writer to intend, that our LORD's death was truly vicarious, and undergone in our stead; that he suffered what was our due and our doom; then the reasoning is just, and the inference undeniable.

He gave himself ανλιλυτρον υπερ †, *a ransom for all.* If this does not imply the notion of *vicarious*, I very much question, whether language itself can express it. —Λυτρον, is a *ransom*; which conveys a vicarious sense, in its most common and authorized acceptation.—Αντι, which is equivalent to *instead* ‡, still more fully ascertains and strengthens the idea.—Υπερ, which is translated *for*, and denotes a substitution of one in the place of another ‖; this added to all, renders the expression

* 2 Cor. v. 14. † 1 Tim. ii. 6.

‡ Αντι, Matth. ii. 22. By this word the *Septuagint* translate the *Hebrew* תחת. And that תחת denotes the *substitution* of one instead of another, no student of the sacred language will venture to deny. See *Gen.* xxii. 13. 2 *Sam.* xviii. 33. 2 *Kings* x. 24.

‖ Δεομεθα υπερ Χριστου, *We beseech you in CHRIST's stead*, 2 Cor. v. 20.—Ινα υπερ σου διακονη μοι, *that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me*, Philem. *ver.* 13. As I was considering the force of this argument, a certain sour-looking gloomy mortal came in my way; and desired, I would introduce him to *Theron* and *Aspasio*, as an evidence for fixing the signification of the prepositon υπερ, when relative to the death of *CHRIST*.—I must confess I did not like either his character or his aspect; and cannot certainly tell, whether any person has made use of him on this occasion. But St *John* stood by, and said, "Introduce him. He prophesies in this instance."—Perhaps the reader is at a loss to guess *whom* I mean. To keep him no longer in suspense, I mean *Caiaphas* the high priest.—He bears the following testimony: IT IS EXPEDIENT FOR US, THAT

preſſion as determinate and emphatical for the purpoſe, as words can poſſibly be.

Shall I argue from a more obvious topic, which has no ſuch dependence on the preciſe ſignificancy of the original?—*Surely*, ſays the prophet; he ſpeaks with vehemence, as of an affair which is *very weighty*; he ſpeaks with confidence, as of a fact which is *very certain: he hath borne our griefs, and carried our ſorrows* *. What can this mean, but he hath taken upon himſelf *that* affliction, and *thoſe* miſeries, which properly belonged to us?—Let us read on, and this meaning will preſent itſelf in the cleareſt view. *We did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of GOD, and afflicted:* we took him for a real malefactor, and thought that he was puniſhed for *his own* miſconduct. In oppoſition to which injurious and falſe ſurmiſe, it is added; *But he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities.*—May I not here borrow the prophet's language, and ſay with an air of certainty? *Surely* this is the plaineſt proof in the world, that our ſins were the meritorious cauſe of *CHRIST*'s ſufferings. And if our ſins were the meritorious cauſe of his ſufferings, our guilt muſt be charged upon him, and puniſhed in him.

St

THAT ONE MAN DIE FOR THE PEOPLE; AND THAT THE WHOLE NATION PERISH NOT.—Now, as to *periſh* ſignifies, not only to die, but to die miſerably; if one man dies for the people, that the people may not die miſerably, he ſaves them from death, by dying himſelf; and what is this, but to die in *their ſtead?* See *John* xi. 50.

To this teſtimony from the mouth of an *enemy*, let me add an atteſtation under the hand of our *friends*, and then leave the impartial reader to determine, concerning the validity of all. Thus writes *Clemens Romanus*, Το αιμα αυτου εδωκεν υπερ ημων Ιησους Χριστος ο Κυριος ημων, ὁ την σαρκα υπερ της σαρκος ημων, ὁ την ψυχην υπερ των ψυχων ημων, Epiſt. 1. ad Corinth.—Exactly to the ſame purpoſe *Juſtin the Martyr* expreſſes himſelf, Αυτος τον ιδιον υιον απεδοτο λυτρον υπερ ημων, τον αδικον υπερ ανομων, τον ακακον υπερ των κακων, τον δικαιον υπερ των αδικων, τον φθαρτον υπερ των θνητων. Epiſt. ad Diogn.

* If. liii. 4.

St *Paul* affirms, that *CHRIST has delivered us from the curse of the law* *. How? By taking our place, and enduring what we deserved; or, as the apostle himself speaks, to the same effect, but in a much more emphatical manner, *by being made a curse for us*. Does not this evidently denote both a commutation of persons, and a translation of punishment? *He* suffered, who was innocent; not *we*, who are guilty.—He also suffered that very sentence, which the law denounced on us. For it is written, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things* †: to this we were obnoxious. It is written again, *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree* ‡; to this *CHRIST* submitted. And if *CHRIST* endured *that very* curse, which we deserved; if, by this means, he delivered us from *all* malediction; either this must be suffering in our *stead* ‖, or else nothing can be called by that name.

Shall

* Gal. iii. 13. † Deut. xxvii. 26. ‡ Gal. iii. 13.

‖ "This (says Dr *South*, in his smart manner) is spoke so "plain and loud by the universal voice of the whole book of "GOD, that scripture must be *crucified* as well as *CHRIST*, "to give any other tolerable sense of the expressions."—And not scripture only, but the common import of language. What says *Mezentius*, when his son, interposing in his behalf, is slain by *Æneas*?

——Pro me hostili paterer succedere dextræ
Quem genui? tuane hæc, genitor, per vulnera servor?
Morte tu vivens?

Here, the father is *saved* by his son's *wounds*; *lives* by his son's *death*. How, and in what manner? By a substitution of one instead of the other; by the son's *suffering*, what must otherwise have *fallen* upon the father.—Should the *Socinian* interpreters try the same experiment on these lines of *Virgil*, which they make upon passages of a parallel signification in scripture; is there a critic in the whole world, that *could approve*, that *could endure*, such flagrant violations of grammar, sense, and taste?—Yet I believe, there is no sincere Christian, but would readily and gratefully say;

——Pro me ultrici succedere dextræ
Dignasti. Tua, CHRISTE DEUS, *per vulnera servor;*
Morte tua vivens.

Shall I descend lower still, and refer our point to the determination of *illiterate* men?—Ask any of your serious tenants, what ideas arise in *their* minds, upon the perusal of the aforementioned texts?—I dare venture to foretel, that, artless and unimproved as their understandings are, they will not *hesitate* for an answer. They will neither complain of obscurity, nor ask the assistance of learning; but will *immediately* discern in all these passages, a gracious REDEEMER suffering in their stead; and, by his bitter, but expiatory passion, procuring the pardon of their sins.—Nay farther, as they are not accustomed to the finesses of criticism, I apprehend they will be at a loss to conceive, how it is *possible* to understand such passages in *any other* sense.

Say not, this is an improper appeal; or these are incompetent judges. The scriptures were written for *their* edification; not to exercise the ingenuity of subtile disputants, but to instruct the *meanest* of mankind in the way of salvation. Therefore, on fundamental articles, we may assuredly conclude, the expression will be easy, and the doctrine perspicuous: so that *he who runs may read, and the wayfaring men, tho' fools* *, *shall not err therein.*—And, tho' I am far from undervaluing the aids of literature, yet, upon those momentous subjects, which are inseparably connected with our eternal felicity, I cannot but regard the *common sense* of plain, honest, humble Christians, as the very *best* of *critics*.

Ther. It has been said by a *learned* critic, That vicarious punishment or suffering, gives us too low ideas of the SON of GOD, as it sinks them to the pain and suffering of a malefactor, the very meanest idea we can have of them.

Asp.

* *Is.* xxxv. 8. The word *fools*, seems to denote persons of *slow* understanding, and *dull* apprehension; as *Luke* xxiv. 25. Or else it signifies those, who, for want of a cultivated education and the improvements of literature, are *accounted* fools by the sons of science; as 1 *Cor.* i. 27.

Asp. The idea is plainly suggested by the word of prophecy, and supported by the attestation of sacred history. In *that* it was foretold, and in *this* it is recorded, that *he was numbered with transgressors* *.—To this purpose speaks St *Paul*, though somewhat more cautiously than your critic. He was made, not indeed *sinful* flesh, but in the *likeness* of sinful flesh; and, though perfectly innocent, was left to endure the vengeance due to the vilest miscreants.

Yes, my dear *Theron;* that glorious PERSON, whom the highest angel adores, "suffered, as if he "had been the criminal, the pain and punishment, "which we, or equivalent to that which we, the real "criminals, should have suffered."—If to consider this, gives us a *low* idea; if to suffer this, was a *deep* abasement; how exceedingly *high*, and how immensely *grand*, is the goodness and the grace manifested therein! The lower you draw the arrow on the string, the loftier flight it makes in the sky. And the greater our LORD's humiliation for us, the more wonderful and adorable his love to us.

Ther. As there cannot be a vicarious guilt, or as no one can be guilty in the stead of another; so there cannot be a vicarious punishment, or no one can be punished instead of another: because punishment, in its very nature, connotes guilt in the person who bears it.

Asp. If you mean by guilt, the *consciousness* of having committed a sin, and the internal *defilement* consequent upon it, we never suppose *such* a vicarious guilt. It is not so much as intimated, that *CHRIST* was stung with the remorse, or stained with the pollution of the adulterous *David*, the perfidious *Peter*, and the persecuting *Saul;* but that he was *treated* by the righteous GOD, *as if* he had perpetrated these, and all the crimes of all believers, either in the past or succeeding ages.

If

* Is. liii. 12. Luke xxii. 37.

If by guilt you mean, the *charge* of a criminal action, and the *obligation* to suffer penalty, your assertion is nothing more than begging the question. It nakedly affirms the very thing in debate. And bare affirmations, unsupported by evidence, are seldom admitted as decisive proofs.—We, on the other hand, are inclined to believe, that all our criminal actions were charged upon *CHRIST*, and that he suffered the punishment which they deserved. The former of these is not so properly called vicarious guilt, as *real guilt*, contracted by one, imputed to another. The latter we readily allow to be *vicarious punishment*, sustained in their stead, whose guilt was imputed,—For both these points we have the authority of truth itself, speaking in the scriptures. *The LORD laid on him the iniquities of us all;* here is the imputation. *CHRIST has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;* here is the vicarious punishment. And you know, to *what casuists* we submit the interpretation of these texts;—common sense, and an honest heart.

Ther. Is not this *shocking* to suppose; *horrid* to affirm? If guilt was really imputed to *CHRIST*, then punishment was his due.—Justice might insist upon it,—and he could not escape it.

Asp. To suppose this, is so far from shocking my apprehension, that it appears, even on *your own* principles, right and necessary.—*Right*, because punishment, as you yourself have declared, always connotes guilt; I would add, either contracted, or at least imputed. And indeed the sufferings of *CHRIST* could not be of a *penal* nature, unless he endured them as under a charge of guilt.—It is *necessary* to suppose this, otherwise how will you vindicate the justice of GOD? He bid his sword awake, and smite * the blessed *JESUS*. But shall the JUDGE of all the earth *do wrong?* Shall he smite, where there is nothing but

* Zech. xiii. 7.

but innocence? no guilt, either personal or imputed? That be far from him! The thought be far from us!

Whereas, upon this supposition, it becomes a *just* and *righteous* thing, that GOD should inflict, and that *CHRIST* should sustain, the most rigorous punishment. And I do not know, but this might be the cause of our LORD's silence, when he was accused at *Pilate*'s bar, and at *Herod*'s judgment seat. It is probable, he considered himself as standing before a higher tribunal; and responsible to eternal justice, for the criminal actions of all his people. In this situation, and in this capacity, clear himself of *personal* demerit he could; clear himself of *imputed* guilt he could not. *Therefore* he was dumb; he opened not his mouth. For though, as the SON of the most high GOD, glory and immortality were his undoubted right; yet, as the SURETY for sinful men, tribulation and death were his condign portion.

And why should this be thought shocking? It is not the least derogation to the transcendent excellency of *CHRIST*. It casts not the least stain on the unspotted sanctity, either of his nature, or his life.—To bear sin, as a *voluntary* surety, is infinitely different from committing it, as an *actual* transgressor. To say, that *CHRIST* was punished for any irregularity of *his own*, would be false, impious, and horrid. To say, that he was charged with *our* guilt, and endured the punishment due,—in the plain and full sense of the word *due*,—to our sins, is so far from being injurious to his dignity, that it pays the *proper* honour to his *mediatorial* undertaking. It pays him the honour of—the highest obedience to his FATHER's will,—the deepest humiliation of his own illustrious person,—and the most boundless benevolence to mankind.

Ther. GOD is love, *Aspasio*, all love. Whereas you would—

Asp. not often interrupt a friend's discourse. But

I cannot forbear interposing a query, on this occasion. —Is there, then, no *just displeasure* in the DEITY? What meaneth that solemn denunciation of the supreme LAWGIVER? *The anger of the LORD shall smoke against that man* *.—What meaneth that awful declaration of the apostle? *The wrath of GOD is revealed from heaven, upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men* †.—Or in what sense are we to explain that alarming interrogatory of the prophet? *Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger* ‡?—Whence could those avenging visitations proceed, which destroyed *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* with a tempest of fire ‖? which swept away so many thousands of the polluted *Israelites* with a raging pestilence ⊥? and consigned over so many millions +— of rebellious *angels* to chains of darkness.

Surely, *Theron*, if there be any determinate signification in language; if any lesson to be learned from the most tremendous judgments; it is, that the LORD, though free from all the discomposure of passion, is nevertheless *angry with the wicked* §; and will make impenitent offenders feel the effects of his wise and holy indignation.

Ther.

* Deut. xxix. 20. † Rom. i. 18. ‡ Nah. i. 6.
‖ Gen. xix. 24. ⊥ Numb. xxv. 9.

+— *Millions.*—The *number* of the fallen angels is no where specified; and the veil sits deep upon the spiritual world; so that we can see no farther than revelation has discovered. Yet, I think, there is sufficient room to ground a *conjecture* upon the reply which one of those execrable apostates made to our LORD: *My name is legion*, (a word signifying a great multitude, five or six thousand;) *for we are many*. If *so* many were employed in tempting and tormenting a *single* person, what armies, what myriads of those invisible enemies, must exist thro' *universal* nature!—It is an *alarming* thought; should make us fly to our divine PROTECTOR, and almighty DELIVERER. See *Mark* v. 9. and 2 *Pet.* ii. 4.

§ Psal. vii. 11. Deut. ix. 8.

Ther. Does not your doctrine represent the all-merciful GOD as a *rigorous* being? who, when once displeased, will hardly be pacified? Whereas, the LORD himself declares by his prophet, *Fury is not in me.*—Men of satirical wit would be apt to insinuate, that you had mistaken JEHOVAH for *Moloch*, and was erecting a Christian church in the valley of the son of *Hinnom*.

Asp. We take our representations of GOD, not from the vain conjectures of men, but from the records of infallible truth. There he is described as a *righteous GOD;* a *jealous* * *GOD;* and, to incorrigible sinners, *a consuming fire* †; though wonderfully condescending, yet transcendently majestic; insomuch that none of the fallen race are permitted to approach his throne, but only through the intervention of a great MEDIATOR ‡; and without shedding of blood, even the blood of a PERSON higher than the heavens, there is *no remission* § of any offences.

When the LORD says, *Fury is not in me* ‖, the words have a peculiar reference to his church; which, in a preceding verse, he had styled, *a vineyard of red wine*. The connection seems to denote, that his fierce anger was turned away from his people, on account of the satisfaction made by their SAVIOUR.—Tho' his own people are the objects, not of his indignation, but of his love, let no ungodly wretches audaciously presume. It is not so with them. They are *the briers and thorns* ⸸ mentioned in the next clause; cumberers of the ground, unprofitable and obnoxious. Them he warns; them he challenges; *Who will set them in battle*

* Exod. xx. 5. † Heb. xii. 29. ‡ John xiv. 16.
§ Heb. ix. 22. Heb. vii. 26. ‖ Is. xxvii. 4.

⸸ There is a fine contrast between the *vineyard* and the *thorns;* at the same time a regular continuation of the metaphor. As nothing is more common, than to see the latter shooting up amidst the former; so nothing is more common, than to have hypocrites intermingle themselves with believers.

tle againſt me? Let them come on; they ſhall find it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD.—Nay; he will not ſtay for their approach: *I will march againſt them*, is his threatening; *I will paſs thro' them; I will burn them together.*—This will certainly be the caſe, if not in the preſent, yet in a future world. When once the maſter of the houſe is riſen up, and has ſhut to the door, mercy is gone for ever. Then nothing muſt be expected, nothing will then be experienced, but *vengeance and fiery indignation to devour the adverſaries of the goſpel.* GOD will then *execute judgments in anger, and in fury, and in furious rebukes* *; with ſuch awful ſeverity and immenſe glory, as will cauſe heaven to adore, and hell to tremble.

Yet in all this there is not the leaſt tincture of *that outrageous* temper, which in man we properly call fury. *In man* fury implies an immoderate degree of reſentment, which will hearken to no reaſoning, and accede to no terms. The goſpel-account proves, even to a demonſtration, that this has no place in the divine nature. So far from it, that GOD, though highly provoked, has *provided* an atonement,—has made *overtures* of reconciliation to his diſobedient creatures,—has even *beſought* † a guilty world, to accept of forgiveneſs.

* Ezek. v. 15.

† 2 *Cor.* v. 20. It was an inſtance of ſingular compaſſion in the bleſſed GOD, that, tho' offended with *Job's* friends, he admitted of a ſacrifice, and directed them to an interceſſor; both typical of *CHRIST JESUS.* But what *unparalleled* condeſcenſion, and *divinely*-tender mercies, are diſplayed in this verſe! *As tho' GOD did beſeech you by us; we pray you in CHRIST's ſtead be ye reconciled to GOD.*—Did the judge ever beſeech a condemned criminal, to accept of pardon? Does the creditor beſeech a ruined debtor, to receive an acquittance in full? Yet our *almighty* LORD, and our *eternal* JUDGE, not only vouchſafes to offer theſe bleſſings, but invites us,—intreats us,—with the moſt *tender* and *repeated* importunity ſolicits us—not to reject them!

giveneſs. This is the purport of that gracious invitation, which follows in the prophet: *Let him*, let the wicked man, forſake his way, and *take hold of my ſtrength:* let him fly to my crucified SON, who is the power of GOD for the ſalvation of ſinners; cleaving to his merits by faith, as ſome poor delinquent to the horns of the altar *. Thus *he ſhall make peace;* all his iniquities ſhall be forgiven, and all my diſpleaſure ſhall be pacified.—So that the inſinuations of our ſatirical gentlemen are as egregiouſly miſtaken, as they are ſhockingly worded.

You are a man of ſenſe *Theron;* and eſteem that character, far above the idle reputation of a wit. As ſuch, let me aſk you ſeriouſly, Is it not for the honour of the divine MAJESTY, to exerciſe juſtice, as well as mercy? Always to pardon, and never to puniſh, would be *tameneſs*, rather than *benignity;* a renunciation of holineſs, rather than a diſplay of goodneſs.—Or can it be right in us, ſo extravagantly to magnify the *amiable*, as to depretiate, nay even annihilate, the *awful* attributes of the DEITY?—This, ſays a poet, is the theology, not of Chriſtians, but of infidels;

Who ſet at odds heaven's jarring attributes,
And with one excellence another wound;
Maim heaven's perfection, break its equal beams,
Bid mercy triumph over—GOD himſelf,
Undeified by their opprobrious praiſe:
A GOD all *mercy is a GOD unjuſt* †.

Ther. But we have lately been told, that the pardoning grace of the LAWGIVER is not obſtructed by any demands of law and juſtice. For he can ſet them aſide.

Aſp.

* This is the preciſe idea included in the original כפר; and the idea is as charming, as the image is expreſſive. *Iſ.* xxvii. 5. 1 *Kings* i. 50.

† Night-Thoughts, N° IV.

Asp. What! Set aside a law, which is holy, righteous, and good!—Set aside a justice, which is eternal, inflexible, and infinite!—St *Paul* gives a very different solution of this difficulty. He tells us,—not that GOD *set aside* his law and his justice;—but that *he set forth* the blessed *JESUS for a propitiation, thro' faith in his blood;* with this express design, *that he might declare his righteousness* *; might demonstrate, not only his clemency, but his justice; even that *vindictive* justice, whose essential character and principal office is, to punish sin.

This seems to be the import of the word *righteousness*, in the present connection, and, I think, more than seems, if we consult the following verse: *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just* †, evidence himself to be strictly and inviolably righteous, in the administration of his government; even while he is the all-forgiving, gracious *JUSTIFIER of* the sinner *that believeth in JESUS.*—According to this plan, *mercy and truth meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other* ‡: all the attributes harmonize; every attribute is glorified; and not one superseded, no, nor so much as clouded.

Ther. If some are verging to one extreme, are not you inclining to the other? Our ears tingle, and our blood runs chill, at the very thoughts of so severe a vengeance, executed on an object so *worthy* and *illustrious.*—Besides, how can we suppose, that the beneficent CREATOR and PRESERVER of men, should *take pleasure* in the sufferings of the most unblameable person that ever existed? especially, since he

* Rom. iii. 25.

† *Rom.* iii. 26. The attribute of justice *must* be preserved inviolate. And inviolate it is preserved, if there was a real infliction of punishment on our SAVIOUR. Nothing else can thoroughly *clear up* this great evangelical *paradox*,—JUST, YET JUSTIFIER OF THE UNGODLY!

‡ Psal. lxxxv. 10.

he himself has made this tender declaration, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice* *.

Asp. *A tender declaration* indeed it is; signifying, that GOD is better pleased with the duties of humanity and charity, than with the most costly and pompous train of sacrifices; nay, that he will even dispense with the observance of *his own* ceremonial institutions, when they interfere with our exercise of beneficence *one to another:* thus resigning (so admirable is his goodness!) the services due to himself, for the benefit and comfort of his creatures.—But all this has no sort of relation to the sacrifice of *CHRIST;* which was the most noble, and the most acceptable oblation, ever made to the KING of heaven.

We are assured by a prophet, that *it pleased the LORD to bruise* his holy child *JESUS.* GOD not only gave up his SON to sufferings, but gave him up with a divine complacency †.—In like manner, the blessed *JESUS* addressed himself to the dreadful task, not only without reluctance, but with the utmost alacrity ‡. *I delight to do thy will,* was the language

* Matth. ix. 13.

† *Divine complacency.*—This is the idea included in the original word רצה, Is. liii. 10. Which is but poorly and faintly represented by the βουλεται of the *Septuagint.* It corresponds with the vigorous phrase, used by the voice from heaven, ευδοκησα, Matth. iii. 17. Or it may be very exactly translated by St *Paul's* beautiful expression, ευαρεστηται, Heb. xiii. 16.—In conformity to this sentiment, the great JEHOVAH is said to smell a sweet savour, or a *savour of rest* ריח ניחח in those sacrifices, which prefigured the crucified *JESUS,* Gen. viii. 21.

‡ *Utmost alacrity.*—There is no *inconsistency* between this assertion, and our LORD's supplication; *FATHER, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.* Such a deprecatory request, put up with so much earnestness, yet with so much submission, only shews the *extreme severity* of our REDEEMER's anguish, and the *prodigious weight* of his woes. And this indeed it shews beyond the power of description.—His ardent love to mankind,

language of his ſoul.—Should you aſk, How could the SON take pleaſure in undergoing, or the FATHER in inflicting, ſuch amazing ſorrows? No otherwiſe, than upon account of thoſe grand and everlaſting advantages which were to reſult from them.

"A ſevere vengeance," you ſay, "ſuch as makes "our ears to tingle."—This is the very thing intended, to *awaken* and *alarm* preſumptuous offenders; that they "may hear, and fear, and do no more wickedly." It is ſuch a method of diſpenſing grace, as is calculated to ſtrike the deepeſt terror, even while it cheriſhes the brighteſt hope;—ſtrike the *deepeſt terror* on every perſevering ſinner,—while it cheriſhes the *brighteſt hope* in every penitent tranſgreſſor.

Ther. If one of my ſervants had affronted or injured me; I ſhould, upon his ſubmiſſive acknowledgment, forgive his fault, and not inſiſt upon ſatisfaction for the wrong. Will you make the FATHER of compaſſions *more inxorable* in his nature, *more rigid* in his demands, than a human MASTER?

Aſp. When you have a ſervant, that owes his being to your power; that has received innumerable benefits from your bounty; yet has offered you innumerable affronts, all attended with the moſt aggravating circumſtances, and all in *defiance* of the *moſt righteous* threatnings;—when you are poſſeſſed of infinite majeſty, and unblemiſhed ſanctity; when truth inviolable, and juſtice inflexible, are eſſential to your character;—then, *Theron*, the parallel will hold good; and *your* conduct ſhall be a pattern for the procedure of JEHOVAH.

Till then, you and I muſt be willing to forgive, becauſe

kind, and his fervent zeal for his FATHER's glory, prompted him to *deſire* theſe ſufferings. His invincible reſolution and unequalled magnanimity, emboldened him not to decline, but to *meet* them. Yet they were ſo great, ſo terrible, that his nature, being human, could not but *recoil* a little, and be *ſtartled* at their approach; and, had it not been divine alſo, muſt inevitably have *ſunk* under the load.

cauſe GOD has made it our bounden duty; and becauſe we have *incomparably more* to be forgiven by the JUDGE of the world, than we can poſſibly remit to our fellow-creatures. In the mean time, you will allow the great GOD, who is *glorious in holineſs*, to communicate his heavenly favours in a manner becoming himſelf; on ſuch *auguſt* and *honourable* terms, as ſhall maintain the rights of his univerſal government, and manifeſt the glory of his adorable attributes.

Ther. Might not GOD have cancelled our tranſgreſſions, and received fallen men into his favour, without any propitiation?—To deny this, would be to limit the HOLY ONE of *Iſrael;* and impoſe conditions on that uncontrollable Sovereign, *who giveth no account of any of his matters.*

Aſp. We need not embarraſs ourſelves, by entering upon inquiries, which may ſeem to lye beyond the limits of human underſtanding. Enough for us to know, that this propitiation was *abſolutely neceſſary* with regard to the firſt covenant. For as GOD had ſolemnly declared, *In the day thou eateſt thereof, dying thou ſhalt die;* his truth and juſtice ſtood engaged to execute the threatening. And no ſecond *Adam* could reſtore the firſt, but by taking this curſe upon himſelf.

Die man, or juſtice muſt; unleſs for him
Some other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid ſatisfaction, death for death *.

Therefore the divine *JESUS*, who lay in the boſom of the FATHER, and knew the counſels of heaven, ſays, *The Son of man muſt be lifted up* † on the croſs. There

* MILTON, Book III. 210.

† *John* iii. 14. Αυτον, &c. The ſame expreſſion is uſed, *Luke* xxiv. 26.—Perfectly conformable to this leading truth, is the current language both of the law and of the goſpel. Under the *law*, GOD himſelf ſays, *I have ſworn, that the iniquity of the houſe of Eli ſhall not be purged* בזבח ובמנחה *with ſlaughtered offering, or with meat-offering for ever;* that is, no

There was a neceſſity for his crucifixion: Becauſe this was *ſtipulated* in the covenant of peace, made between the FATHER and the SON:—Becauſe it was expreſsly *foretold* by the ancient prophets, (and the ſcripture cannot be broken,) that the MESSIAH *ſhould be cut off out of the land of the living*:—Becauſe a variety of types, and a multitude of ſacrifices, *prefigured* his death: *one* of the types pointed out the very manner of his ſuffering; and *all* the ſacrifices, detached from their dependency on this great oblation, would have been beggarly elements,—mere unavailing empty ceremonies.

I apprehend, it is no limitation of the great GOD, to ſuppoſe him incapable of acting otherwiſe, than in *perfect* and *perpetual* conſiſtency with himſelf.—Neither is it any infringement on his abſolute ſovereignty, that he cannot but order all affairs *for the honour* of his juſtice, his fidelity, and each of his exalted perfections.—This is the very thing which the ſacred writers expreſs in their plain but ſtrong language, *GOD who cannot lie* *: *He cannot deny himſelf* †.

Ther. GOD is often ſaid to *forgive* our ſins; particularly, in that ſublime paſſage, where he proclaims his name to *Moſes*: *The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, abundant in goodneſs and truth; keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin.* Now, pardon is a *free* thing. Freeneſs is implied in the very nature of forgiveneſs,

kind of oblation ſhall be accepted; the guilt ſhall never be expiated. 1 *Sam.* iii. 14 Under the *goſpel*, the apoſtle declares, *If we ſin wilfully*, by a final apoſtaſy from *CHRIST*, *there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins*; they are, to ſuch perſons, and in ſuch circumſtances, abſolutely irremiſſible, *Heb.* x. 26.—Which phraſes are evidently connected with, and founded on, this grand doctrine, That the appointed, the *only* way of obtaining pardon from the righteous GOD, is by the intervention of an expiatory ſacrifice.

* Tit. i. 2. † 2 Tim. ii. 13.

neſs. Take away the former, and you deſtroy the latter.—If an *equivalent* be given, pardon is no longer pardon, but a *purchaſe*. Forgiveneſs ceaſes to be an act of grace, and becomes the payment of a debt.

Aſp. The text you quote is truly ſublime, and equally comfortable. But you forget to mention one article of very great moment, which cloſes and completes the glorious character; which ſeems added on purpoſe, to prevent any *wrong apprehenſions* of the DEITY, and to guard againſt all *abuſe* of the doctrine: *He will in no wiſe clear the guilty* *.—GOD will not, on *any conſideration* whatever, abſolve the obſtinate, perſevering, irreclaimable offender: neither will he acquit any of the guilty race, *abſolutely*, *unconditionally*, or without ſuch a ſatisfaction as may repair the honour of his injured law.

We have redemption thro' his blood, ſays the apoſtle, *even the forgiveneſs of our ſins* †. It is forgiveneſs, you ſee, though bought with a price. It is remiſſion, though procured by blood.—It is free, with regard to that

* *He will in no wiſe clear the guilty*, Exod. xxxiv 7. This text is not without its difficulty, eſpecially in the original.—*Steuchus* interprets the words, *Et innocens non erit ſine piaculo:* He ſhall not be acquitted without a piacular ſacrifice.—I think, they may be tranſlated, with a little more propriety and exactneſs, thus; *Pardoning iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin,* נקה לא *though not with impunity;* or rather, *tho' he will by no means let it go unpuniſhed*, meaning *ſin;* which is the immediate *antecedent;* is expreſſed in the three preceding words; and may very properly be referred to in this clauſe. Then the ſenſe will be as follows; "Though GOD pardons ſin, yet it "ſhall not go unpuniſhed. He will certainly inflict his righ-"teous vengeance, and exerciſe his punitive juſtice, though "not on the ſinner, whom he ſpares; yet on the SURETY, "whom he has provided."—In the ſame manner *Cocceius* renders the paſſage, *et non exercens impunitatem;* and expounds it much to the ſame purpoſe.—We have this very word in the ſame remarkable conſtruction. *Jer.* xxx. 11. נקה לא אנקה which is tranſlated, and with ſufficient fidelity, *I will not leave thee altogether unpuniſhed.*

† Eph. i. 7.

that *fovereign* BEING, who pardons. For he was under no obligation to *admit* of a propitiatory ſacrifice; but might, without any diminution of his dignity, have left all mankind to periſh in their ſins.—It is free, with regard to the *obnoxious* creatures, who are pardoned. For it is vouchſafed, without any ſatisfaction demanded at *their* hands, or any penalty inflicted on *their* perſons.—It is in this reſpect alſo free, that an intereſt in the great atonement is granted to us, without the leaſt merit, or any *deſerving* qualifications of our own.

In all this, GOD is not only merciful, but moſt tenderly and immenſely merciful. And will any one calumniate this adorable method of exerciſing mercy? becauſe proviſion is alſo made for the glory of GOD's truth, GOD's holineſs, and ſupreme authority?

Ther. Does not your notion of a propitiatory? ſacrifice, derogate from the goodneſs of the *almighty* FATHER, and transfer all our obligations to the *incarnate* SON?

Aſp. Is there not goodneſs, in *allowing* a ſubſtitute to ſuffer in our ſtead?—Is there not ſtill greater goodneſs, in *providing* a ſubſtitute for us, without any ſolicitation on our part?—Is there not the very higheſt exertion of goodneſs, in appointing a *dear*, an *only*, an *incomparably*-excellent SON for the purpoſe?—This marvellous ſcheme, far, very far from obſcuring, moſt illuſtriouſly diſplays the ſuperabundant loving-kindneſs of the FATHER.

GOD *ſo loved the world*, apoſtate and polluted as it was—*How* did he love it? To a degree unutterable by any tongue; inconceivable by any imagination; and only to be expreſſed by the infinitely-precious effects. *Loved it* ſo, *that he gave his only begotten SON, that whoſoever believeth on him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life* ‡. And does this derogate from the goodneſs of the *almighty* FATHER, to give, not barely

‡ John iii. 16.

barely pardon and life, but give them through the hands, nay, through the *wounds*, the *agonies*, the *death* of his divineſt, deareſt SON?

Such privileges, vouchſafed on any terms, muſt challenge the devouteſt acknowledgments. But, when attended with this *additional* demonſtration of favour, they are enough to inflame us with gratitude, and tranſport us with admiration. They not only manifeſt, but *commend* * the divine love; ſhew it to the greateſt advantage, in the higheſt perfection, with every circumſtance of recommendation and endearment.—By this means, bleſſed GOD, thou haſt unſpeakably enhanced thy benefits! thou haſt rendered them, tho' invaluable in *themſelves*, exceedingly more ſo, by the *manner* of conferring them!

Ther. Again in your elevations, *Aſpaſio?*—The world you know is grown very *rational* and *inquiſitive*; will admit nothing but upon clear evidence, and full conviction. We expect, in all religious inquiries, not the flights of fancy, or the ſallies of zeal, but a ſobriety of reaſon and ſolidity of argument.

Aſp. The world, rational as it is, ſeems, by the taſte of the preſent age, no enemy to *works* of *fancy*. The world, therefore, may not be diſpleaſed with an affecting ſtory. And a ſtory, ſuitable to the occaſion, juſt occurs to my mind; ſuch as may ſerve to ſhadow forth, though very *faintly*, the ſurpaſſing benignity and grace of our crucified LORD.

An *Aſiatic* queen, departing this life, left behind her three accompliſhed ſons; all arrived to years of maturity.

* *Rom.* v. 8. Συνιστησι. It ſeems to be an image taken from the practice of *tradeſmen*; who, in ſhewing their goods, point out their excellencies, and ſet, in the cleareſt light, whatever may beſpeak their worth, or recommend them to the purchaſer.—Perhaps, it may allude to the cuſtom of ſending, with ſome favourite and worthy perſon, *recommendatory letters:* in which his good qualities are deſcribed, and every thing is mentioned, that may embelliſh his character, and render his preſence reſpectable, in this ſenſe St *Paul* uſes thoſe nearly-related words, συνιστανειν, συνιστωμεν, 2 Cor. iii. 1.

maturity. The young princes were at ſtrife, who ſhould pay the *higheſt reſpect* to their royal mother's memory. To give ſcope for their generous contention, they agreed to meet at the place of her interment; and there preſent the moſt honourable gift they knew how to deviſe, or were able to procure.—The *eldeſt* came, and exhibited a ſumptuous monument, conſiſting of the richeſt materials, and ornamented with the moſt exquiſite workmanſhip.—The *ſecond* ranſacked all the beauties of the blooming creation; and offered a garland of ſuch admirable colours, and delightful odours, as had never been ſeen before.—The *youngeſt* appeared, without any pompous preparation; having only a cryſtal baſon in one hand, and a ſilver bodkin in the other. As ſoon as he approached the tomb, he threw open his breaſt; pierced a vein, that lay oppoſite to his heart; received the blood in the tranſparent vaſe; and, with an air of affectionate reverence, placed it on the beloved parent's monument.—The ſpectators, ſtruck with the ſight, burſt into a ſhout of general applauſe, and immediately gave the preference to this laſt oblation.

If it was reckoned ſuch a ſingular expreſſion of love, to expend a *few* of thoſe precious drops, for the honour of a *parent;* O! how matchleſs! how ineffable was the love of *JESUS*, in pouring out all his vital blood, for the ſalvation of *enemies!*

Ther. My greateſt objection is ſtill to come.—If *CHRIST* ſuffered in our ſtead, he muſt ſuffer *that very* puniſhment which was due to our iniquities. This your orthodox divines affirm to be incomparably worſe than bodily death; to be nothing leſs than the everlaſting diſpleaſure of GOD.

Aſp. The puniſhment due to our iniquities, was ſhame, death, and the divine wrath.

As for *ſhame*—Was ever ſhame like that ſhame which our deſpiſed REDEEMER bore! Tho' Prince

of

of the kings of the earth, yet *born* in a ſtable, and laid in a manger. When an *infant*, exiled from his own country, and a vagabond in a foreign land.—When engaged in the diſcharge of his *miniſtry*, accuſed of the moſt flagitious crimes, and branded with the blackeſt names.—When brought to his *exit*, apprehended as a thief; condemned as a malefactor; nay, the vileſt of malefactors, a robber and a murderer is preferred before him.—His executioners poured contempt upon all his venerable offices. As a *king*, they ridiculed him, by putting a mock ſceptre into his hand; and crowning him with ragged thorns *, inſtead of a royal diadem. They vilified his *prophetic* character, by hood-winking his eyes; ſtriking his bleſſed head; and then aſking, in cruel deriſion, *Who it was that ſmote him* †. They caſt reproach upon his *prieſtly* undertaking, when they ſharpened their tongues with malicious irony, and ſhot out thoſe bitter words; *He ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave* ‡.—To render his infamy as *public*, as it was *ſhocking*, they hung him on a tree; and expoſed him, defiled as he was with ſpitting, and diſfigured with wounds, to the gazing eyes and contumelious ſcoffs of numberleſs ſpectators.

If you doubt, whether *CHRIST* ſuſtained the *wrath* of GOD, let us follow him to the garden of *Gethſemane*. A ſcene, which I would always recollect, when I walk along the *fertile vale*, or expatiate amidſt the *flowery garden* ||, or enjoy the delights of any rural retirement

* To have crowned the bleſſed *JESUS* with *ſtraw*, would have been a vile inſult, and treating him like an ambitious madman. But to crown him with *keen*, *pungent*, *lacerating* thorns, was adding cruelty to their inſults; unheard of barbarity to the moſt contemptuous mockery, *Matth.* xxvii. 29.

† Scornfully inſinuating, that his ſacred prophetic office was fit for nothing, but to ſerve ſuch deſpicable purpoſes, *Matth.* xxvi. 68. ‡ Matth. xxvii. 42.

|| Alluding to the Evangeliſt's deſcription of *Gethſemane*, who repreſents it as a *garden*; and to the etymology of the word, which ſignifies a *fat* or fruitful *valley*, גת שמנים John xviii. 1. Matth. xxvi. 36.

retirement.—He had no remorſe, to alarm his ſpotleſs conſcience; yet fearfulneſs and trembling came upon him. No violence was offered to his ſacred perſon; yet a horrible dread overwhelmed him.—'Twas night, cold night; and though our divine MASTER lay proſtrate upon the earth, amidſt the fall of chilling dews, he *ſweat*,—ſweat *blood*, ſweat *great drops* of blood, *running down* in reeking ſtreams to the ground. —He was anointed with the oil of gladneſs above his fellows *; yet ſo inſupportable was his affliction, that he could not forbear crying out, *My ſoul is ſorrowful,—exceeding ſorrowful,—ſorrowful even unto death!*—What cauſe, what *adequate* cauſe, can be aſſigned for this amazing anguiſh? None but the wrath of his almighty FATHER; who was now become an inexorable JUDGE; treated him no longer as the SON of his love, but as the SURETY for unnumbered millions of guilty creatures.

Ther. Was it poſſible, that the innocent and holy *JESUS*, the *dearly-beloved* SON of GOD, ſhould be an object of his FATHER's *wrath?*

Aſp. It was not only poſſible, but unavoidable and neceſſary. *Unavoidable*, with reſpect to the divine holineſs; *neceſſary*, for the procurement of our redemption.—Sin was charged upon *CHRIST;* all the ſins of all believers, in all ages and places of the world. And could the *infinitely-righteous* GOD behold ſuch a deluge of iniquities, (thoſe abominable things, which he hateth,) without expreſſing his diſpleaſure? Or could the bleſſed *JESUS* be puniſhed, *truly* puniſhed for them, without any painful ſenſation of their horrid evil, and of that tremendous indignation which they deſerved?

If this was not the caſe, who can maintain the *dignity* of his conduct, during the agony in the garden? Was there no pouring out of the divine diſpleaſure? Then his behaviour in that hour of trial, did not equal the

* Pſal xlv. 7. † Matth. xxvi. 38.

the intrepidity of the three *Hebrew* youths; who continued calm, and without the leaſt perturbation, while the furnace was heated into ſevenfold rage *.—But if this was the time, in which, no created arm being ſtrong enough to give the blow, *it pleaſed the LORD to bruiſe him* †; if the moſt high GOD *bent his bow like an enemy, and ſtood with his right hand as an adverſary* ‡; it is eaſy to account for the prodigious conſternation of our REDEEMER. It is not to be wondered, that his heart, though endued with otherwiſe invincible fortitude, ſhould become like *melting wax*. For who knoweth the power of that wrath, at which the pillars of heaven tremble ‖?

Ah! *Theron*, the vinegar and the gall which they gave him to drink, were not half *ſo bitter*, as the cup of his FATHER's wrath. Yet, for our ſake, he drank it off to the very dregs.—The nails that pierced his hands, and the ſpear that cleft his heart, were not half *ſo ſharp*, as the frowns of his eternal FATHER's countenance; which, for our conſolation, he patiently ſubmitted to bear.—He was rent with wounds, and racked with pain; his bones were diſlocated, and his nerves convulſed; a thouſand thorny daggers were planted in his temples, and life flowed out at ten thouſand guſhing veins. Yet this, all this was *gentle*, was *lenient*, in compariſon of thoſe inexpreſſible agonies, which penetrated his *very ſoul*. The former fetched not a ſingle complaint from his mouth; the latter wrung from his breaking heart that paſſionate exclamation; *My GOD! my GOD! why haſt thou forſaken me?*—Aſtoniſhing words! Surely, a *diſtreſs* beyond all imagination grievous ⊥, uttered them. Surely the

* Dan. iii. 16, 17, 18.

† Iſ. liii. 10. ‡ Lam. ii. 4. ‖ Job xxvi. 11.

⊥ To heighten our idea of this diſtreſs, the Evangeliſts make uſe of the *moſt forcible* words—ἤρξατο ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι, he was ſeized with the *moſt alarming* aſtoniſhment—ἀδημονεῖν, he was overwhelmed with *inſupportable dejection*—περίλυπος, he was *beſieged*

the *vengeance*, not of men, but of heaven itself, extorted them. Every syllable of which speaks, what the mourning prophet describes, *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see; if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger* *?

Here, now, is *our whole* punishment endured; the shame of the cross, and the sorrows of death; the suspension of the ALMIGHTY's favour, and the terrible sensations of his wrath.

Ther. Be it so. Yet all this amounts to no more than part of payment. For these sufferings were transient; *temporary* only, not *eternal*. Therefore the main circumstance, the most bitter ingredient, was wanting.

Asp. In the estimate of divine justice, and in point of penal satisfaction, they were equivalent to our endless punishment; especially, if we consider the severity of the sufferings, and the dignity of the SUFFERER.

The *severity* of the sufferings.—At the last day, all those fierce eruptive flames, which have raged in *Ætna*, in *Vesuvius*, and in every other burning mountain throughout the world;—all those confined subterranean

sieged on all sides, as it were, with an army of *invading sorrows*. —He *wrestled*, amidst strong cries and tears, not only with the malice of men, and rage of devils, but with the infinitely more dreaded indignation of GOD: he wrestled even unto *an agony* of spirit, ἀγωνία. All these circumstances of horror and anguish, constitute what a celebrated poet very justly styles,

A weight of no more than ten worlds could bear!

The *critic*, probably, will admire the propriety and beauty of this line: which, composed of nothing but monosyllables, and clogged with the frequent repetition of a cumbrous consonant, makes the sound remarkably apposite to the sense.—May we all be *sacred* critics! have, not only a *refined taste*, to relish such elegancies of composition, but an *awakened heart*, to feel the energy of such important truths!

* Lam. i. 12.

neath fires, which have ſo terribly ſhaken the foundations of *Jamaica*, *Sicily*, and *Conſtantinople;*—in a word, the whole element of fire, however employed through all the revolutions of time, where-ever diffuſed through all the regions of the globe, will then be collected from all quarters, and burſt forth in one vaſt, reſiſtleſs, general conflagration. In ſome ſuch manner, all that wrath, which was due to the innumerable multitude of ſinners, redeemed from every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; which, if executed on the offending creatures, had been prolonged to eternal ages; all that wrath was contracted into one inconceivably-dreadful blaze, and at once poured out upon the interpoſing SURETY, at once flamed forth on our heavenly VICTIM.—This will appear more than probable, if, among other particulars, we contemplate the unequalled magnanimity of our LORD, who is ſtyled *the Lion of the tribe of* Judah * ; and compare it with his bloody ſweat in the garden, and his exceeding bitter cry on the croſs †.

The *dignity* of the SUFFERER.—Had our SAVIOUR's ſufferings been the ſufferings of a mere man, or of the moſt exalted angel, I acknowledge, they could have bore no proportion to our demerit. It were impoſſible for a finite being, to ſuſtain the wrath, or diſcharge the debt. But they were the ſufferings of the PRINCE of heaven, and the LORD of glory; before whom all men are as duſt, and all angels as worms.—Was an infinite MAJESTY offended? An infinite MEDIATOR atoned. Weigh the dignity, the immenſe dignity of the REDEEMER's perſon,

* Rev. vi. 5.

† I think, the language of the *Greek* liturgy, is the language of ſtrict propriety, as well as of fervent devotion, Ἀπερίληπτον ου πάθημα σου. The ſufferings of our LORD are, in their meaſure and weight, to us *unknown;* abſolutely beyond the reach of human imagination.

perſon, againſt the everlaſting duration of our puniſhment, and it will not only *counterbalance*, but *preponderate*. Finite creatures can never make an infinite ſatisfaction; no, not through the moſt unlimited revolution of ages. Whereas, when our divine LORD undertook the work, being truly and properly infinite, he finiſhed it *at once*.—So that his ſufferings, though temporary, have an all-ſufficiency of merit and efficacy. They are, in this reſpect, parallel; nay, on acount of the infinitude of his nature, they are more than parallel to an eternity of our puniſhment.

It was *EMMANUEL*, it was the incarnate GOD who *purchaſed the church*, and redeemed ſinners, *with his own blood* *: The eſſential grandeur of our SAVIOUR communicated its ennobling influence to every tear he ſhed, to every ſigh he heaved, and every pang he felt. This renders his ſufferings a *perfect*, as their vicarious nature renders them a *proper* ſatisfaction. And though *the wood of Lebanon was not ſufficient to burn, nor all the beaſts thereof ſufficient for a burnt-offering* †; this ſacrifice fully anſwers the exigence of the caſe.—This ſacrifice ſends up an ever-acceptable odour to the ſkies, and diffuſes its ſweet perfume thro' all generations; ſuch as appeaſes heaven, and revives the world.

Yes, *Theron*, you muſt give me leave to repeat the delightful truth; It was *the great GOD, even our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, who gave himſelf for us* ‡. His ſacrifice therefore muſt be *inconceivably meritorious*. O! that ſinners, the *vileſt* of ſinners, knew its all-ſufficient efficacy! they would no longer be holden in the bonds of iniquity, by that deſtructive ſuggeſtion of the devil, *There is no hope* ‖.

Ther. What valuable end could ſuch vicarious ſufferings accompliſh? Suppoſe GOD abſolutely inexorable,

* Acts xx. 28. † Iſ. xl. 16. ‡ Tit. ii. 13. 14. ‖ Jer. ii. 25.

rable, and they cannot *avail*. Suppose him divinely merciful, and they are *needless*.

Asp. The difficulty you propose, I think, has been obviated already. So that I have no occasion to solve your dilemma, but only to answer your query. These sufferings,—as a *punishment*, gave ample satisfaction to the divine violated law;—as a *sacrifice*, they perfectly reconciled us to our offended GOD;—as a *price*, they redeemed us from every evil, and purchased for us a title to all good.

This is a subject of the most distinguished importance. Let not my *Theron* imagine, I would abuse his patience, if I dwell a moment longer on the favourite topic.—I might enumerate many ends, all *magnificent* and *gracious*, accomplished by this wonderful expedient. I content myself with specifying a few; but those, such as bring the highest *glory* to GOD,—administer the most solid *comfort* to man,—and most effectually promote the interests of *piety*.

In this we have a manifestation of the most awful justice, and at the same time a display of unbounded goodness.—*Awful justice;* in that the great and terrible GOD, though determined to exercise mercy, would exercise it only in such a manner, as might vindicate the authority of his law; might testify the purity of his nature; and declare the inviolable faithfulness of his word.—*Unbounded goodness;* in that he with-held not his SON, his only SON, but freely gave him up for us all; gave up "the BRIGHTNESS of his glory," to be covered with infamy; gave up "the BELOVED of his soul," to expire in agonies; on purpose to obtain honour and immortality for apostate men.—The *torments* inflicted on all the *damned* in hell, are not so fearful a monument of GOD's justice, as those dying agonies of the *LORD JESUS CHRIST*. Nor could a *thousand worlds*, conferred on mankind, have been such an act of superabundant munificence, as that gift of his ever-blessed SON.

Look

Look we for *power* and *wisdom*?—To uphold the humanity of *CHRIST*, under all the studied cruelties of men, under the insatiate rage of devils, and the far more tremendous curse of the divine law *: to conquer sin, and death, and hell, by a person bound with fetters, nailed to a tree, and *crucified in weakness*: to expiate, by *one* offering, the innumerable millions of crimes, committed by all his people, from the beginning to the end of time: was not this power? matchless power? astonishing power?—And as for *wisdom*, how admirable was the contrivance, which could harmonize the seemingly-opposite claims of mercy and of justice! and not only *satisfy* each, but *magnify* both!—Had punishment been executed, in *all* its *rigour*, on the sinner's person, mercy had lost her amiable honours. Had the sinner been restord to favour, without *any penalties* sustained either by himself or his SURETY, justice had been set aside as an insignificant attribute. Whereas, by our LORD's vicarious and expiatory sufferings, both are manifested, and both are exalted. Therefore the scripture affirms, that GOD hath not only exercised, but *abounded in wisdom and prudence*,—nay, hath abounded in *all* wisdom and prudence †, by this combination of righteous vengeance and triumphant grace; which is, at once, so honourable to himself, and so advantageous to his people.

Ther. "Advantageous to his people"—I am glad, you are come to this point. This is what I want to have

* *Is.* xliii. 6. *I the LORD will hold thine hand, and will keep thee.* This is spoken of the *MESSIAH*. It gives him assurance of effectual support, when the vengeance of heaven, the fury of hell, and the sins of the world, should fall upon him with united violence. To support the MEDIATOR under these circumstances, is mentioned as a very distinguished act of that omnipotent arm, which *created the heavens, and spread forth the earth, and giveth spirit to them that walk therein*, ver. 5.

† Eph. i. 8.

have cleared up. I am for those doctrines, which glorify GOD, by doing good to man. Give *me* the religion, whose aspect is benign, and whose agency is beneficial. Not like a *meteor*, to dazzle us with a vain glitter; not like a *comet*, to terrify us with a formidable glare; but like yonder *sun*, whose beams shed light, and life, and joy all around.

Asp. If this be what you seek, and what you prize, the *Christian* religion, this doctrine in particular, will answer your warmest expectations, and challenge your highest esteem. For it is rich with benefits of the most needful, the most desirable, and most exalted kind.

The first and grand blessing is *pardon* of *sins*.—Pardon, not of small sins only, but of the most *aggravated*, the most *horrid*, the most *enormous*. Be they flaming as scarlet, be they foul as the dunghill, be they black as hell itself; yet they shall be as the spotless wool, or as the virgin-snows *; they shall "be, as "though they had never been."—Pardon, not of a few, but of *all* sins. Be they numerous as the hairs of our head, numerous as the stars of heaven, numerous as the sands upon the sea-shore, *the blood of JESUS CHRIST cleanseth from them ALL* †.

Hereby we have *victory* over *death*, and *admittance* into eternal *life*.—For thus saith the holy apostle, concerning the poor sojourners in clay, *Seeing therefore the children were partakers of flesh and blood, HE also partook of the same; that, by* undergoing *death, he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver those, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage* ‡.—And thus saith the venerable elder, concerning the glorified saints in light, *These are they who came out of great tribulation; and they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the LAMB: therefore are they before the throne* ‖.

The *Philistines* rejoiced, when *Samson*, the destroyer of

* Is. i. 18. † 1 John i. 7. ‡ Heb. ii. 14, 15. ‖ Rev. vii. 14.

of their country, was delivered into their hands. How much *greater reason* have we to rejoice, since the blessed *JESUS* has vanquished our last enemy! has made death the minister of endless life, and the grave a gate to eternal glory! —*Joseph* had cause to be glad, when he put off his prison-garments, and was clothed with change of raiment; when he was brought from the dungeon to the palace, and honoured with a seat at the right hand of the king. But is it not an incomparably-*richer blessing*, to have our robes washed in redeeming blood, and our souls cleansed from all guilt? Is it not an incomparably-*higher advancement*, to be admitted into the blissful presence, and to possess the everlasting kingdom of GOD?

To comprehend all in a word:—Hereby are procured, even for the most unworthy creatures, all the *benefits* of the *new covenant*. Therefore the blood of *CHRIST* is styled by a prophet, *the blood of thy covenant* *; by an apostle, *the blood of the everlasting covenant* †; and our LORD himself says, *This is the new covenant in my blood* ‡.—Is it a privilege, to know GOD, the infinitely-amiable centre and source of all perfection? Is it a most valuable endowment, to have his laws put into our minds, and written on our hearts? Is it a branch of real felicity, to have our numberless sins forgiven, and not one of our iniquities remembered any more? Is it the compendium of all happiness to have GOD for our portion, and our exceeding great reward? to be his peculiar treasure, his loving and beloved people ‖?—Of all these we may say, They are *the purchase* of EMMANUEL's blood: and whoever is truly interested in the *one*, is unquestionably entitled to the *other*.

Who then would refuse so *comfortable*—

Ther. Too comfortable, we might imagine, to be either

* Zech. ix. 11. † Heb. xiii. 20.

‡ *Luke* xxii. 20. The original word διαθηκη signifies either a *testament*, or a *covenant*. ‖ Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12.

either *true* in itself, or *safe* in its consequences. Must it not tend to *embolden* the sinner in the prosecution of his vices? Who need scruple to transgress, or be very solicitous to repent, if an all-atoning SACRIFICE has been offered for every kind and every degree of wickedness?

Asp. Would you have sinners *intimidated?* Nothing speaks such terror to the children of disobedience, as the bitter passion and accursed death of *CHRIST.*—All the rhetorical aggravations of sin, with regard to its loathsome nature, and execrable vileness;—all the severity of vengeance, executed upon rebellious angels, or wicked men;—all, all are weak and inexpressive, compared with the *dreadful emphasis* of this great transaction. For, if the LORD almighty spared not *his own* SON, when guilt was, not found in him, but only imputed to him; how much less shall he spare *incorrigible* offenders, who both habitually commit, and obstinately persist in, their daring impieties?

If, by repentance, you mean an *ingenious sorrow* for our transgressions; nothing is so likely to break the stony, or melt the icy heart, as these doleful effects of sin.—Let us imagine ourselves present at *Calvary*, and standing by the cross. See! the innocent, the amiable, the illustrious SAVIOUR, hangs on a tree: a tree, torturous as the rack, and ignominious as the gibbet! See! his face is foul with spitting, and his sides are tore with the scourge. His veins stream with blood, and his heart is wounded with anguish.—There he hangs, abandoned by his friends; reviled by his enemies; and forsaken even by his GOD.—Can we reflect, that *we*, even *we* were the cause of this inconsolable misery; and not feel remorse in our consciences, or sorrow in our minds? Can we reflect, that for *us*, for *us*, he bore this amazing torment; and not smite our breasts, or be pained at our very souls?

If, by repentance, you mean a *thorough renunciation* of all iniquity, no motive is so effectual, to divorce

the heart from every abominable idol, and divert the feet from every evil way, as an attentive consideration of our REDEEMER's death.—Whose indignation does not rise against the infamous wretch, that betrayed the blessed *JESUS?* Who is not ready to detest those envenomed tongues which accused him, and those barbarous hands which crucified him? How then can we cherish those horrid lusts, which were the *principal* actors in this deepest of tragedies? How can we caress, how can we entertain, how can we endure those execrable iniquities, which were *the betrayers and murderers* of the PRINCE of life?—*He bore our sins in his own bleeding, agonizing body on the tree;* not that we should be emboldened to repeat them, but incited to abhor them, and induced to forsake them; that, in our practice and our affections, we should not only be averse, but even *dead to sin* *.

If you would have *benevolence*, your favourite principle, take place and operate; it is impossible to urge so endearing a persuasive to universal good-will, as this *kindness and love of GOD our SAVIOUR* †. How can we indulge the sallies of resentment, or harbour the seeds of animosity, when the meek, the merciful, the infinitely-gracious REDEEMER, laid down his life for his *bitterest enemies?* How can we treat with contempt or indifference, even the *meanest* of *mankind*, since our divine MASTER gave his all-glorious person for vile wretches and miserable sinners?—Never was there so *winning* a call to disinterested charity, as the amiable example of *CHRIST;* never so *binding* a cement of brotherly love, as the blood of the crucified *JESUS*.

In short, would you have people possessed of every heavenly virtue, and animated to the practice of every good work? Nothing administers so powerful an incitement to them all, as a *lively* and *appropriating* sense of this wondrous grace. Set home by the *HOLY*

* 1 Pet. ii. 24. † Tit. iii. 4.

*HOLY GHOST**, it produces such a warm gratitude, and such a heart-felt joy, as are far more operative than the most awful threatenings, or the most cogent reasonings.—So that, quite contrary to your suspicions, the native tendency of this excellent doctrine is, to suppress ungodliness, and promote piety.

Observe, how the present calm evening, yonder mild declining sun, and these soft balmy breezes, have unlocked the flowery prisons, and detached a *profusion* of *odours* through the air; have inspirited the little songsters of the grove, and fetched *lavish harmony* from their throats. So sweetly will a true belief in *JESUS CHRIST* and him crucified, draw forth all the powers of the soul, in acts of ready and chearful obedience —He is therefore said, not only to justify, but also to *sanctify the people with his blood* †.

Let us consider the death of *CHRIST*, in this its full grandeur and extensive efficacy; and we shall discern the admirable propriety of the apostle's remark; *It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the CAPTAIN of their salvation perfect through sufferings* ‡. IT BECAME; as an *act* of *sovereignty* in GOD, it comported with the dignity, and emblazoned (if I may so speak) the incomprehensible majesty of his perfections.—As an execution of *impartial vengeance* on our SURETY, it asserted the rights of divine government, and secured the utmost veneration to the divine

* The reader will give me leave, on this occasion to subjoin the noble doxology of our church; which, when thus applied, may be an excellent means, both of expressing our gratitude, and of quickening our devotion.—*Glory be to the FATHER*, for providing this all-sufficient atonement, and giving his SON to save a ruined world.—*Glory be to the SON*, for humbling himself to the death of the cross, and obtaining eternal redemption for sinners. *Glory be to the HOLY GHOST*, for testifying of *CHRIST* in our hearts, and appropriating this great salvation to our souls.

† Heb xiii. 12. ‡ Heb. ii. 10.

divine law.—As an emanation of *rich indulgence* to us, it redreſſed all our miſery, and retrieves our whole happineſs.—In *each*, in *every* reſpect, it is worthy of the moſt grateful and adoring acceptance from ſinful man, and ſuch as will be had in everlaſting honour by the choirs of ſaints, and the hoſt of angels.

Ther. I thank you, *Aſpaſio*. Your arguments have not indeed converted me, but they have ſtrengthened my faith. I never was ſo unhappily miſtaken, as to diſbelieve the ſatisfaction made by our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*; made to divine juſtice; made for the ſins of the world. But I now ſee more clearly its *reaſonableneſs* and *importance*; its chearing aſpect on the *guilty* conſcience, and its benign influence on the *moral* conduct.

Aſp. I congratulate you, dear *Theron*, from my inmoſt ſoul, on your thorough conviction of this important truth. May you have ſtill more *extenſive* and *generous* views of the glorious article! and may every renewed view be more and more influential on your heart!

Reviving, raviſhing thought! to have HIM for our bleeding *victim!* HIM for our great *propitiation!* at whoſe feet the armies of heaven bow, and the ſaints in light adore!—Reviving, raviſhing thought! to have *all* our puniſhment ſuſtained, and the *whole* curſe of the law exhauſted; ſo that juſtice itſelf can demand no more!—Nay, to have ſo perfect a ranſom paid for our redemption, that it is not *barely* an act of favourable indulgence, but of the *higheſt* righteouſneſs * alſo,

* Therefore the apoſtle ſays, *God is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins*, 1 John i. 9. *Faithful;* becauſe he had promiſed this bleſſing, by the unanimous voice of all his prophets.—*Juſt!* ſurely then he will *puniſh!* No; for this very reaſon he will pardon.—This may ſeem ſtrange; but, upon the evangelical principles of atonement and redemption, it is apparently true: becauſe, when the debt is paid, or the purchaſe made, it is the part of *equity* to cancel the bond, and conſign over the purchaſed poſſeſſion.

ſo, to pardon, accept, and glorify the believer!—In SUCH a method of reconciliation, how fully does the judgment acquieſce, and how ſecurely the conſcience reſt!

Excuſe me, *Theron*. My affections are again upon the ſoar. But I clip their wings.—Only let me aſk, Is not this doctrine the *grand peculiarity* of the goſpel, by which it ſtands diſtinguiſhed from every other religion profeſſed in the world?—Is it not the *central point*, in which all the lines of duty unite, and from which all the rays of conſolation proceed?—Strike this article from the creed, and you reduce the *myſtery of godlineſs* to a ſyſtem of ethics; you degrade the Chriſtian church into a ſchool of philoſophy.—To deny the expiation made by our REDEEMER's ſacrifice, is to obſcure the *brighteſt manifeſtation* of divine benignity, and to undermine the *principal pillar* of practical religion; is to make a deſperate ſhipwreck of our everlaſting intereſts, and to daſh (ſuch, I fear, it will be found, in the final iſſue of things) ourſelves to death, on the very *rock* of *ſalvation*.

Ther. Now, I believe, it is time to repair homewards. And I hope, it will be no diſagreeable exchange, if we reſign our ſeat on the mount, for a place in the dining-room.

Aſp. Pray, let me inquire, as we walk along (for I was unwilling to interrupt our diſcourſe, merely to gratify my curioſity,) what may be the *deſign* of yonder *edifice*, which riſes on a ſmall eminence, near the public road? It is neither a tower, nor a dwelling-houſe; but looks like a ſtately column, erected on purpoſe to beautify the proſpect.

Ther. It is a ſort of monumental pile; erected, as the ſtory goes, on a very memorable occaſion.—Queen *Eleanor* accompanied King *Edward the Firſt* to (what was called) the holy war: in which he gained ſignal advantages over the infidels, and acquired a large ſhare of renown to himſelf. After many gallant exploits performed

performed in the field, a treacherous and desperate *Saracen*, demanding admittance into his chamber, under pretence of private business, wounded him with an empoisoned dagger. The consequence of which, his physicians declared, must be inevitable and speedy death, unless the poison was sucked out by some human mouth. This might possibly preserve the royal patient, but would be extremely dangerous to the operator.

Dangerous as it was, his Queen claimed the office; insisted upon it, as the consort's right; and executed it so *faithfully*, that she saved the king's life; so *happily*, that she lost not her own.—After this, she returned to *England*, lived many years, and bore several children. But, sooner or later, royalty itself must pay the debt to nature. Dying on a journey to *Scotland*, she was brought back to the last and long home of our *English* monarchs *.—Where-ever her corpse rested, in the way to its interment, a structure † (such as you now behold) was raised, in order *to perpetuate the memory of her conjugal affection.*

Asp. And should not our hearts be a *monument* of *gratitude* to the blessed *JESUS?* who drew the deadly venom, not from our veins, but from the immortal part of our nature; and not at the hazard, but at the loss, the *certain* and *unavoidable* loss of his precious life.—He opened his breast, opened his very soul, to the keenest arrows of vindictive justice; that, transfixing him, they might drop short of us; "the "poison whereof drank up *his* spirits ‡," that the balm of peace might refresh *ours*.

O my

* *Westminster-Abbey.*

† One of these structures stands on the high road, near *Northampton*. It is surrounded with a large flight of steps, at the bottom; and ornamented, towards the top, with four female statues, in full proportion. A *Latin* inscription informs the traveller, concerning its occasion and design;

In perpetuam Reginæ Eleanoræ
Conjugalis amoris memoriam.

‡ Job vi. 4.

O my *Theron!* let our memories be the tablet, to record this unexampled inſtance of compaſſion and goodneſs. Let our affections dwell upon the tragical, the delightful hiſtory; till they melt into contrition, and are inflamed with love.—If we want an *inſcription*, let us make uſe of thoſe noble lines, which, in the fineſt climax imaginable, deſcribe the magnificence and grace of this aſtoniſhing tranſaction:

——Survey the wondrous cure,
And at each ſtep let higher wonder riſe.
Pardon for infinite offence!—and pardon
Through means that ſpeak its value infinite!
A pardon bought with blood!—with blood divine!
With blood divine of HIM I made my foe!—
Perſiſted to provoke!—Though woo'd and aw'd,
Bleſs'd and chaſtis'd, a flagrant rebel ſtill!—
Nor I alone! A rebel univerſe!
My ſpecies up in arms!—Not one exempt!
Yet for the fouleſt of the foul, he dies *!

* Night-Thoughts, N° IV.

DIALOGUE V.

ASPASIO having ſome letters of importance to anſwer, as ſoon as the cloth was taken away, retired from table.—His epiſtolary engagements being diſpatched, he inquired for *Theron*. The ſervants informed him, that their maſter walked into the garden.—A very little ſearch found him, ſeated on an airy mount, and ſheltered by an *elegant arbour*.

Strong and ſubſtantial plants of *liburnum* formed the ſhell; while the ſlender and flexile ſhoots of *ſyringa* filled up the interſtices.—Was it to compliment, as well as to accommodate their worthy gueſts, that they interwove the luxuriant foliage? Was it to repreſent

thoſe tender but cloſe attachments, which had *united* their affections, and *blended* their intereſts?—I will not too poſitively aſcribe ſuch a deſign to the diſpoſition of the branches. They compoſed, however, by their twining embraces, no inexpreſſive emblem of the *endearments* and the *advantages* of friendſhip. They compoſed a canopy, of the freſheſt verdure, and of the thickeſt texture; ſo thick, that it entirely excluded the ſultry ray; and ſhed both a cool refreſhment, and an amuſive gloom: while every unſhelter-ed tract glared with light, or fainted with heat.

You enter by an eaſy aſcent of ſteps, lined with turf, and fenced with a baluſtrade of ſloping bay-trees. —The roof was a fine *concave*, peculiarly elevated and ſtately. Not emboſſed with ſculpture; not mantled over with fret-work; not incruſted with ſplendid freſco; but far more delicately adorned with the ſyringa's *ſilver tufts*, and the liburnum's *flowering gold:* whoſe large and lovely cluſters, gracefully pendent from the leafy dome, diſcloſing their ſweets to the delighted bee, and gently waving to the balmy breath of ſpring, gave the utmoſt enrichment to the charming bower.

Facing the entrance, lay a ſpacious graſſy walk; terminated by an octangular baſon, with a curious *jet d'eau* playing in the centre. The waters, ſpinning from the lower orifices, were attenuated into innumerable little threads; which diſperſed themſelves in an horizontal direction, and returned to the reſervoir, in a drizzling ſhower. Thoſe which iſſued from the higher tubes, and larger apertures, either ſprung perpendicularly, or ſpouted obliquely; and formed, as they fell, ſeveral lofty arches of liquid cryſtal, all *glittering* on the eye, and *cooling* to the air.

Parallel to the walk ran a *parterre;* planted with an aſſemblage of flowers, which advanced, one above another, in regular gradations of height, of dignity, and of beauty.—Firſt, a row of *daiſies*, gay as the ſmile of youth, and fair as the virgin-ſnows.—Next,

a range

a range of *crocuſes*, like a long ſtripe of yellow ſatin, quilted with threads, or diverſified with ſprigs of green. —A ſuperior order of *ranunculuſes*, each reſembling the cap of an earl's coronet, repleniſhed the third ſtory with full-blown tufts of gloſſy ſcarlet.—Beyond this, a more elevated line of *tulips* *, raiſed their flouriſhed heads, and opened their enamelled cups; not bedecked with a ſingle tint only, but glowing with an intermingled variety of almoſt every radiant hue. —Above all aroſe, that noble ornament of a royal eſcutcheon, the *flower-de-luce*; bright with ethereal blue, and

* Here is, it muſt be confeſſed, ſome little deviation from the general laws of the ſeaſon; ſome *anachroniſm* in the annals of the parterre. The flowers united in this repreſentation, do not, according to the *uſual* proceſs of nature, make their appearance *together*. However, as, by the œconomy of a ſkilful gardener, they *may* be thus aſſociated; I hope, the poſſibility of the thing will ſkreen my flowery productions from the blaſts of cenſure!—Or, may I not ſhelter my blooming aſſembly, under the remark of a maſterly critic? which is as *pertinent* to the caſe, as if it had been written on purpoſe for our vindication; and in all reſpects ſo *elegant*, that it muſt adorn every work, which quotes it; and charm every perſon who reads it.

"A painter of nature is not obliged to attend her in her "ſlow advances, which ſhe makes from one ſeaſon to another, "or to obſerve her conduct in the ſucceſſive production of "plants and flowers. He may draw into his deſcription all "the beauties of the ſpring and autumn; and make the whole "year contribute ſomething to render it more agreeable. His "roſe-trees, woodbines, and jeſſamines may flouriſh together; "and his beds be covered at the ſame time with lilies, violets, "and amaranthuſes.—His ſoil is not reſtrained to any parti-"cular ſet of plants, but is proper either for oaks or myrtles, "and adapts itſelf to the product of every climate.—Oranges "may grow wild in it; myrrh may be met with in every hedge; "and if he thinks it proper to have a grove of ſpices, he can "quickly command ſun enough to raiſe it. His concerts of "birds may be as full and harmonious, and his woods as thick "and gloomy, as he pleaſes. He is at no more expence in "a long viſta, than a ſhort one; and can as eaſily throw his

and grand with imperial purple: which formed, by its graceful projections, a corniſh or a capital of more than *Corinthian* richneſs; and imparted the moſt conſummate beauty to the blooming colonnade.

The whole, viewed from the arbour, looked like a *rainbow*, painted upon the ground; and wanted nothing to rival that reſplendent arch, only the boldneſs of its ſweep, and the advantage of its ornamental curve.

To this agreeable receſs *Theron* had withdrawn himſelf. Here he ſat muſing and thoughtful, with his eye fixed upon a picture repreſenting ſome *magnificent ruins*.—Wholly intent upon his ſpeculation, he never perceived the approach of *Aſpaſio*, till he had reached the ſummit of the mount, and was ready to take a ſeat by his ſide.

Aſp. Loſt, *Theron!* quite loſt in thought! and unaffected with all theſe amiable objects; inſenſible amidſt this profuſion of beauties, which, from every quarter, make their court to your ſenſes!—Methinks, the ſnarling Cynic in his tub, could hardly put on a greater ſeverity of aſpect, than my polite philoſopher in his blooming *Eden*.

Ther. Ah! my dear friend, theſe flowery toys which embelliſh the garden, are *familiar* to my eye, and therefore *cheap* in my eſteem. I behold them frequently; and, for that reaſon, feel but little of the pleaſing ſurpriſe, which they may poſſibly awaken in a ſtranger.—Something like this we all experience, with regard to events infinitely *more worthy* our admiring notice.

" caſcades from a precipice of half a mile high, as from one " of twenty yards. He has his choice of the winds, and can " turn the courſe of his rivers, in all the variety of *meanders*, that are moſt delightful to the reader's imagination. " In a word, he has the modelling of nature in his own hands, " and may give her what charms he pleaſes, provided he does " not reform her too much, and run into abſurdities by endeavouring to excel." *Spect.* vol. VI. N°. 418.

tice. Else, why are we not struck with a mixture of amazement, veneration, and delight, at the grand machinery and magnificent productions of nature?

That the hand of the ALMIGHTY should wheel round the vast terrestrial globe, with such prodigious *rapidity*, and exact *punctuality*; on purpose to produce the regular vicissitudes of day and night; on purpose to bring on the orderly succession of seed-time and harvest!—We wonder, when we read of the *Israelites* sojourning forty years in the desart, marching backward and forward over its burning sands; and find neither their cloaths *waxing old* * by so long a use, nor their feet *swelling* † with such painful journeys. Yet we are neither impressed with wonder, nor affected with gratitude, when we enjoy the benefits of the *air*, which clothes the earth as it were with a garment; which has neither contracted any *noxious* taint, through the extensive revolution of almost six thousand years; nor suffered any *diminution* of its natural force, though exercised in a series of unremitted activity, ever since the elementary operations began.

This draught in my hand, shews us the instability of the grandest, *most laboured* monuments of human art. They are soon swept away, among the other feeble attempts of mortality; or remain only, as you see here, in shattered ruins; memorials of the vain and powerless ambition of the builders.—How strange then, that a structure, incomparably more tender and delicate, should be preserved to *old age*, and *hoary hairs!* that the bodily machine, which is so exquisite in its frame, so complicated in its parts, and performs so many thousands ‡ of motions every moment, should continue

* Deut. viii. 4. † Neh. ix. 21.

‡ *Thousands*—Not to mention the *spontaneous*, if we consider only the *mechanical* motions, which are continually performed in the animal system—the digestive action of the stomach—the vermicular agitation of the bowels—the progress of the chyle thro' the lacteal vessels—the many, many operations of the secreting glands

continue *unimpaired*, yet act without intermission, so many days, and weeks, and months, and years.—How strange all this! yet, because common, how seldom does it excite our praise, or so much as engage our notice!

Asp. Your remarks are as just, as the neglect of them is customary.—Unaccountable supineness! Though GOD *doth great things*, worthy of all observation; *yea, and wonders without number:* we yawn with indolence, instead of being animated with devotion, or transported with delight. *Lo! he goeth before us*, in evident manifestations of wisdom and power, *yet we see him not; he passeth on also*, and scatters unnumbered blessings from his providential hand, *but we perceive him not* *.

This, though greatly culpable, is to be reckoned among the *smallest* instances of our ungrateful insensibility.—Are we not inattentive even to the work of redemption? That work, which, according to the emphatical declaration of scripture, *exceeds in glory* †; is by far the greatest, the most marvellous of all sublunary, perhaps of all divine transactions.—Are we not shamefully unaffected, even with the appearance of GOD in human flesh? Though the KING of kings vouchsafes to exchange his throne, for the humiliation of a servant, and the death of a malefactor; though he is pleased, by the imputation of his active as well as passive obedience, to become *the LORD our righteousness;* yet—

Ther. You are taking an effectual way, *Aspasio*, to rouse

glands——the compression of the lungs, and all their little cellular lodgments, by every act of respiration——above all, that grand impetus, the systole of the heart; which, by every constriction, darts the crimson current through an innumerable multitude of arteries, and drives, at the same instant of time, the refluent blood through an innumerable multitude of corresponding veins——Such a view will oblige us to acknowledge, that *Theron's* account is far from being extravagant; that it rather *diminishes*, than *exaggerates* the real fact.

* Job ix. 10, 11. † 2 Cor. iii. 9.

rouse me from my reverie, and make me indeed like the snarling philosopher. "Imputed righteousness is "a scheme grosly frivolous and absurd; utterly in- "sufficient to answer the end proposed; and, one "would think, could never be depended on, where "there is the least degree of understanding, and ca- "pacity for reasoning *."

Asp. Who is warm now, *Theron?* May I not remind my friend, that the *resentful* is no more fitted to work conviction, than the *rapturous?*—Perhaps, you have not duly considered this subject; nor seen it in the proper

* The reader will probably be disgusted, at this *heat* of temper, this *asperity* of diction, and both so *abruptly* introduced. —I have no apology to make for my *Theron.* The reader has reason to be disgusted; has reason to be chagrined. Only let me desire him to remember, that this is the very spirit, nay these are the *very words*, of a celebrated opposer of our doctrine; not added, when he has fully approved the absurdity of the scheme; but assumed, even upon the entrance to his discourse.

I have often wondered, that disputants, especially on religious subjects, should chuse to deal in such *acrimonious* and *reproachful* language. *Does the wrath of man work the righteousness of GOD?* Or is a passionate invective the proper means, either to conciliate our affections, or convince our judgment? —Why should we not *write* in the same genteel and obliging strain, in which we *converse?* Were we to meet our antagonist in a friend's parlour, and have a personal conference on the subject, our speech would be kind, and our remonstrances calm;—"I am sorry, Sir, that you have espoused such no- "tions. They seem to me extremely wrong and equally "dangerous. I am apt to think, you have not duly consider- "ed, either the little ground they have to support them, or "the pernicious consequences that may attend them."

Why should not our controversies from the Press be carried on with such a *candid* and *amicable* strife? This would certainly render them more pleasing to the reader, more profitable to the public, and much more likely to have their desired effect upon our opponent.—For my part, I admire the humanity and tenderness of the poet's resolution, even more than the boldness of his figures, or the beauty of his expression:

Tu lapides loqueris, ego byssina verba reponam.

per point of view. I have sometimes beheld a ship of war several leagues off at sea. It seemed to be a *dim cloudy* something, hovering on the skirts of the horizon; contemptibly mean, and not worthy of a moment's regard.—But, as the floating citadel approached, the masts arose; the sails swelled out; its stately form, and curious proportions, struck the sight. It was no longer a shapeless mass, or a blot in the prospect, but the *master-piece* of human contrivance, and the *noblest* spectacle in the world of art. The eye is never weary of viewing its structure, nor the mind in contemplating its uses.

Who knows, *Theron*, but this sacred scheme likewise, which you now look upon as a *confused heap* of errors, may very much improve, when more closely examined; may at length appear a wise and benign plan, admirably fitted to the condition of our fallen nature, and perfectly worthy of all acceptation?

Ther. I know not what may happen, *Aspasio*. But there seems to be very little probability of such a change. For, though my last opposition was a *mock-fight;* in my present objections I am *very sincere*, and to this doctrine I am a determined enemy.—The notion of a substituted and vicarious righteousness is absurd even to common sense, and to the most natural and easy reflections of men.

Asp. It may not, my dear friend, agree with our natural apprehensions; nor fall in with the method, which *we* might have devised, for the salvation of mankind. But this is the voice of scripture, and a maxim never to be forgotten: *GOD's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways* *.—*His righteousness is like the strong mountains, and his judgments are like the great deep* †; the former immoveable, the latter unsearchable.

Ther. The mention of mountains puts me in mind of what I was reading yesterday;—the keen irony, with

* Is. lv. 8. † Psal. xxxvi. 6.

with which *Abimelech*'s principal officer chastised the blustering *Gaal: Thou seest the shadow of the mountains, as if they were men* *. He, it is sarcastically intimated, was afraid, and my *Aspasio* seems to be fond, of shadows.

Asp. Happy for your *Aspasio*, that irony is no argument. If a jury was impannelled to try me and my doctrine, I should certainly except against irony. Generally speaking, he is neither *a good man*, nor a *true*. And, if I remember right, you yourself consented to set him aside in this debate. I shall therefore adapt my reply, rather to what is solid, than what is smart.

"This notion," you say, "is absurd even to common sense."—A saying upon which I must beg leave to put a query. It was, I own, absolutely beyond the power of common sense, unassisted by divine revelation, to *discover* this truth.—I will grant farther, that this blessing infinitely *transcends* whatever common sense has observed in all her converse with finite things.—But, if I have any the least acquaintance with common sense, I am very sure, she *will not*, she *cannot* pronounce it an absurdity. To this judge I refer the cause.

And to *open* the cause a little, let me just observe, that GOD imputed our sins to his SON. How else could the immaculate *JESUS* be punished, as the most inexcusable transgressor? *Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts* †.—Is not this the voice of a judge, pronouncing the sentence, and authorising the execution? Or rather, does it not describe the action of justice, turning the sword from us, and sheathing it in *CHRIST?*—who, if he was our substitute with regard to *penal suffering*, why may he not stand in the same relation with regard to *justifying obedience?* There is the same reason for the one as for the other. Every argument in favour of the former, is equally conclusive in behalf of the latter.

Ther.

* Judg. ix. 36. † Zech. xiii. 7.

Ther. I very freely grant, that *CHRIST JESUS* was punished in our stead; that *his* death is the expiation of *our* sin, and the cause of our security from penal suffering. But this——

Asp. will undeniably prove, that sin was imputed to him; otherwise he could not *truly* suffer in our stead, nor be *justly* punished at all. "And imputation "is as reasonable and justifiable in *one case*, as in the "*other*; for they both stand upon one and the same "foot; and, for that reason, he who throws down "one, throws down both."—I should not have interrupted my *Theron*, only to introduce this answer from an eminent divine: who adds, what should be very seriously considered; "And therefore whoever rejects "the doctrine of the imputation of our SAVIOUR's "*righteousness* to man, does, by so doing, reject the "imputation of man's *sin* to our SAVIOUR, and "all the consequences of it. Or, in other words, he "who rejects the doctrine of the *imputation*, does, by "so doing, reject the doctrine of the expiation like-"wise *."

Ther. I know nothing of this divine; and, eminent as he is, can hardly take his *Ipse dixit* for a decision.

Asp. I was in hopes, you would pay the greater regard to *his* opinion, because he is not in the number of the whimsical fanatics.

Give me leave to observe farther, that the imputation of *CHRIST*'s righteousness, bears an evident analogy to another great truth of *Christianity*. We did not personally commit *Adam*'s sin, yet are we chargeable with guilt, and liable to condemnation, on that—

Ther. How! *We* chargeable with guilt, and liable to

* STAYNOE *upon salvation by JESUS CHRIST alone*, vol I. p. 334.—Where the reader may find several weighty considerations, clearly proposed and strongly urged, for the explanation and establishment of this capital doctrine.

to condemnation, on account of *Adam*'s tranſgreſſion! This poſition I muſt deny; I had almoſt ſaid, I muſt abhor. None other could, in the eye of juſtice and equity, be blameable for any offence of our firſt parents, but *they only*.

Aſp. So ſays *Theron;* but what ſays St *Paul?* This may be the voice of natural reaſon, but what is the language of divine revelation? *In whom*, that is, in *Adam, all have ſinned.*

Ther. The words, if I remember right, are—*For that all have ſinned.*

Aſp. In the margin, they are tranſlated, as I have repeated them. For this interpretation I might contend, as not in the leaſt incompatible with the original phraſe *, and as the *moſt preciſely* ſuitable to the ſacred argument. But I wave this advantage; let the words run into your mould, and the tranſlation take your form. They are equally deciſive of the point in debate.—They aſſign the *reaſon*, why death came upon all men; *infants* themſelves not excepted: *For that*, or *inaſmuch as*, all have ſinned. How? Not in their own perſon; this was utterly impoſſible; but in that firſt grand tranſgreſſion of their federal head; which, as it could not be actually committed by them, muſt, according to the tenor of the apoſtle's arguing, be imputed to them.

Ther. Pray, what do you mean by that ſtiff, and to me unintelligible phraſe, *federal head?*

Aſp. I mean what *Milton* celebrates, when he repreſents the almighty FATHER thus addreſſing his eternal SON:

> ——— *Be thou in Adam's room*
> *The head of all mankind, tho' Adam's ſon.*
> *As in him periſh all men, ſo in thee,*

* Ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον. Rom. v. 12. Not to mention the famous diſtinction of *Epictetus*, τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, nor the well-known adage of *Heſiod*, μίσρον δ' ἔτι πᾶσιν ἄρισον. See chap. iv. 18. v. 2. of this very epiſtle; where the prepoſition ἐπὶ is uſed in *Aſpaſio's* ſenſe.

As from a ſecond root, ſhall be reſtor'd
As many as are reſtor'd, without thee none *.

I mean what the apoſtle teaches, when he calls *CHRIST the ſecond man* †, and *the laſt Adam* ‡.—The ſecond! the laſt! How? Not in a numerical ſenſe; not in order of time; but in this reſpect,—That, as *Adam* was a public perſon, and acted in the ſtead of all mankind; ſo *CHRIST* was a public perſon, and acted in behalf of all his people:—That, as *Adam* was the *firſt* general repreſentative of this kind, *CHRIST* was the *ſecond* and the *laſt*; there never was, and there never will be, any other:—That what they ſeverally did, in this capacity, was not intended to *terminate* in themſelves, but to *affect* as many as they reſpectively repreſented.—This is St *Paul*'s meaning, and this is the foundation of the doctrine of imputation.

Ther. If you build it on no other foundation, than *your own* particular ſenſe of the apoſtle's words, perhaps your ground may prove ſandy, and treacherous to its truſt.

Aſp. I build it upon mine, and I deduce it from yours, *Theron*.—But I am far from reſting the whole weight of the cauſe upon a *ſingle* text. It is eſtabliſhed, again and again, in this ſame chapter.—Neither do I wonder at the prejudices which you and others may entertain againſt the doctrine. It lyes quite out of the road of reaſon's reſearches: it is among *the wonderful things of GOD's law*. This the inſpired penman foreſaw, and modelled his diſcourſe accordingly. Like ſome ſkilful engineer, who, tho' he makes the whole compaſs of his fortification ſtrong, yet beſtows *peculiar* and *additional* ſtrength on thoſe parts, which he apprehends will be expoſed to the fierceſt attack: ſo the wiſe, the divinely-wiſe apoſtle, has inculcated, and re-inculcated, this momentous point; has enforced it with all the aſſiduity of zeal, and confirmed it by all the

* Book III. 285. † 1 Cor. xv. 47. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 45.

the energy of expreſſion.—*If thro' the offence of one many be dead—The judgment was by one to condemnation—By one man's offence death reigned by one—By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation* *.—That there may remain no poſſibility of miſtaking his meaning, or of eluding his argument, he adds, *By* ONE *man's diſobedience*, MANY *were made ſinners* †.

Ther. Sin, I am told by a celebrated expoſitor, ſometimes ſignifies *puniſhment*. He farther informs me, that we may be ſaid to ſin in *Adam*, not by the imputation of his diſobedience to us, but by becoming obnoxious to thoſe ſufferings which were due to his ſin.

Aſp. Then the apoſtle's reaſoning will ſtand in this form; *Death came upon all men, for that all have ſinned;* that is, "Death came upon all men, becauſe all "have been puniſhed; or, an obnoxiouſneſs to pu- "niſhment came upon men, becauſe all are become "obnoxious to puniſhment." A *goodly* ſtrain of argumentation for an unerring writer to uſe!—But ſurely *Gamaliel*'s pupil would diſclaim, much more would *CHRIST*'s ambaſſador ſcorn, ſuch weak and unmeaning chicanery. He mentions ſin and its puniſhment; but never hints, that they are intended to ſignify *one* and the *ſame* thing. He all along maintains a diſtinction between them; repreſents the former as the cauſe of the latter. *Judgment*, *condemnation*, *death*, are owing to *ſin*, *offence*, *diſobedience*. It is by the imputation of theſe, that we become obnoxious to thoſe.

This account is clear, is natural, and wants no ſtrained criticiſms to ſupport it. This account demonſtrates the equity of that providential government, which executes the ſentence of death, even on thoſe deſcendents of *Adam*, who have not *ſinned* in their own perſons. It alſo illuſtrates the procedure of that ſovereign grace, which treats as righteous, and entitles to life, even thoſe believers in *JESUS*, who have not *obeyed*

* Rom. v. 15, 16, 17, 18. † Rom. v. 19.

obeyed in their own perſons.—What ſays our church? You have a great veneration for the *church of England*, *Theron*.

Ther. I have. But I fear, my *Aſpaſio* has neither ſo honourable an opinion of her worſhip, nor ſo ſteady an adherence to her conſtitution: otherwiſe he would not ſo highly extol thoſe ambitious and canting hypocrites the *Puritans;* who were the moſt inveterate enemies of our excellent eſtabliſhment, and would have rejoiced in its utter ſubverſion.

Aſp. As to the Puritans, you will do me the juſtice to acknowledge, that I ſpeak only of their *evangelical* tenets, abſtracted from all political principles.—As to myſelf, your fears are friendly, but I truſt they are *groundleſs*. I would only aſk, Who are to be deemed the moſt affectionate and faithful ſons of their ſacred mother?—Thoſe, I preſume, who moſt *cordially* embrace her doctrines, and moſt *dutifully* ſubmit to her precepts. By this touchſtone let my fidelity be tried. And for an immediate trial, be pleaſed to repeat her ninth article.

Ther. I cannot ſay, that I remember the particular words of any, though I have often read, and very much approve them all.

Aſp. I wiſh, you would commit to your memory, four or five of the moſt diſtinguiſhed *. They are a valuable treaſure, and contain the quinteſſence of the goſpel.

Theſe are the words of the ninth article: "Original ſin is the fault and corruption of every man, "that naturally is ingendered of the offspring of *Adam*." It is the *fault*, ſays the pious Biſhop *Beveridge*, and therefore we are guilty of it; it is the *corruption* alſo, and therefore we are defiled with it.—Our homilies have recourſe to no ſuch palliatives, and qualifying interpretations, as my *Theron*'s expoſi-

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* Eſpecially, articles IX. X. XI. XII. XIII.

tor uſes. One of them affirms point-blank, that "in "*Adam* all men ſinned univerſally." This ſeems to be a paraphraſe on the text, whoſe tranſlation you lately controverted.—In what ſenſe our great poetical divine underſtood the ſacred writer, is apparent from the following words; which are ſuppoſed to have been ſpoken by JEHOVAH himſelf:

———*Adam's crime*
Makes guilty all his ſons *.

And from another paſſage, where our rebellious progenitor, bewailing his aggravated miſery, and the extenſive malignity of his ſin, declares,

———*In me all*
Poſterity ſtands curs'd †.

For my own part, I muſt confeſs, that, if the tranſmiſſion of original depravity be granted, I know not how the imputation of *Adam*'s deſtructive apoſtaſy can be denied. If we had no concern in the one, how could we be juſtly puniſhed with the other? I ſay *puniſhed*. For, to loſe the primitive integrity of our nature, and inherit a depraved diſpoſition, is at once a moſt deplorable calamity, and a moſt terrible puniſhment.—Corruption tranſmitted, and guilt imputed, ſeem to be doctrines *indiſſolubly* connected. To allow the former, and reject the latter, is, in my apprehenſion, to acknowledge the effect without admitting the cauſe.

Ther. To make us parties in a covenant, which we did not agree to, can this be *equitable?* To ruin us for a crime, which we never committed, can this be *merciful?* Surely, this is a flagrant injuſtice, never to be aſcribed to the all-gracious GOD. A diabolical barbarity, add ſome, never to be mentioned without the utmoſt deteſtation.

Aſp. I ſee no cauſe for ſuch a tragical outcry of barbarity,

* MILTON, book III. 290. † Book X. 817.

barity, nor indeed for any complaint of injuſtice. Not to inſiſt upon the ſovereignty of an all-creating GOD, and his unqueſtionable right to *do what he will with his own* *, I would only aſk,—Did he not condeſcend to tranſact with man, not on the foot of abſolute uncontrollable authority, but in the honourable and delightful way of a *covenant?*—Were not the terms of this covenant perfectly eaſy, and wonderfully gracious? *Wonderfully gracious:* for they propoſed a ſtate of inconceiveable and everlaſting felicity † to creatures, who were entitled to *no* happineſs; had not the leaſt claim to *any* good; no, not ſo much as to the privilege of exiſtence. *Perfectly eaſy:* for what was the condition on man's part? Not any rigorous act of duty, nor ſevere courſe of ſelf-denial, but the free enjoyment of *millions* of bleſſings and pleaſures, with only the prohibition of *one* pernicious indulgence. Here then is made, on one hand, a promiſe of the moſt *glorious* reward that GOD himſelf could give: and nothing required, on the other, but the *ſmalleſt* expreſſion of allegiance that man himſelf could wiſh. And is this injuſtice? is this barbarity?

Ther. All this was equitable enough with regard to *Adam:* but why ſhould we be condemned for *his* violation of the covenant? Or how was ſuch a conſtitution of things gracious, with reſpect to *us?*

Aſp. "Why condemned?" Becauſe we ſhould have been partakers of the benefit and the glory, if he had perſevered in his duty. To this, I preſume, none would object. And if they *would not* to the one they *ought not* to the other.

You aſk farther, "How was ſuch a conſtitution "of things gracious with reſpect to us?"—I anſwer, Becauſe it was the *moſt likely* means to ſecure the happineſs of us and all mankind. Was not *Adam*, of all perſons, by far the beſt qualified to act as a general head?

* Matth. xx. 15. † Luke x. 28.

head? He had a perfection of knowledge to discern his true interest, a perfection of holiness to capacitate him for obedience, and a perfection of happiness disposing him to perseverance. As none could have more eminent qualifications, none could have *so many* obligations. His own welfare, both bodily and spiritual was at stake: the eternal interests of his rising family, and of his remotest posterity, were depending: the lives, the souls, the *everlasting all* of the whole human race, were embarked on the single bottom of his fidelity. Therefore the felicity of every individual that should spring from his loins, was a fresh motive to vigilance, an additional engagement to duty *.—As *his* love to his offspring was more refined, more exalted, more godlike than ours, all these considerations and inducements must operate upon him, in their fullest scope, and with the strongest energy.—What an entrenchment was here to keep out disobedience, and ward off ruin! An entrenchment *deep* as hell, *high* as heaven, *wide* as the whole extent of the human species.

Here then I may venture to throw the gauntlet, and challenge the whole world. Let the most penetrating mind devise a scheme, so wisely and graciously calculated to *ascertain* the success of a *probationary* state. If this be impracticable, then must every mouth be stopped: no tongue can have the least reason to complain: I, for my part, shall think myself obliged to admire the benignity of my CREATOR's conduct: and

* Should any person imagine himself more capable of standing than *Adam*, who was endowed with all the perfections of an innocent, holy, godlike nature; I think, by this very imagination, he begins to fall: *fall* into pride.—Should any person suppose, that, from a view to his own particular salvation, he would continue faithful; when *Adam* was not engaged to fidelity, from a regard to his own and the final happiness of all his posterity; he seems to be just as wise as the mariner, who persuades himself, that, tho' a *thousand* anchors could not secure the ship in a storm, yet *one* might have done it effectually.

and GOD may justly demand of all intelligent creatures, *What could have been done more* for the preservation and felicity of mankind, *that I have not done* *?

Especially, when to all this we add, that the same almighty BEING, who appointed *Adam* to be our representative in the first covenant, without asking our *actual consent;* appointed also *CHRIST* to be our representative in the second covenant, without staying for our *actual solicitation*. When we take *this* into the account, there remains not the least shadow of injustice; but goodness, transcendent goodness, shines forth with the brightest lustre.

Ther. Goodness, *Aspasio!* This is surprising indeed. Why, if *Adam*'s transgression be laid to our charge, we are *damnable* creatures, the very moment we exist; and are liable to the torments of hell, even on account of his disobedience. To term this goodness, is the greatest of paradoxes! to affirm it of the DEITY, is little less than blasphemy!

Asp. Let us be calm, my dear friend, and consider the case impartially. If it is not a real truth, I shall be as willing to relinquish it, as yourself.

Is not death, eternal death, the wages of every sin? And if of every sin, then doubtless of *original;* which is the *fountain*, from whence all the streams of actual iniquity flow; or rather the *abyss*, from whence all the torrents pour.—That which could not be pardoned, but by the humiliation and agonies of GOD's adorable SON, may reasonably be supposed to deserve the most dreadful vengeance. And it is affirmed, by an authority which you will not dispute, that, "for "original as well as actual sin, the offering of *CHRIST* "is a propitiation and satisfaction †."

Does not St *Paul* deliver it as a maxim in divinity, That, *by the offence of one*, Adam he undoubtedly means, *judgment came upon all men to condemnation* ‡? The import of the words, together with the connection

* If. v. 4. † Article XXXI. ‡ Rom. v. 18.

tion of the paſſage, leads us to underſtand this of a condemnation to *eternal* miſery.—*The import of the words:* for they are doubled *, to make them peculiarly ſtrong in their ſignification; and each word, within the compaſs of this very epiſtle, is uſed in that awful latitude of meaning †. *The connection of the paſſage:* becauſe it ſtands oppoſed to that juſtification which is unto life. This, we are ſure, includes the idea of an everlaſting duration. And why ſhould its tremendous counterpart be leſs extenſive?

This ſenſe is evidently *patronized*, and this doctrine moſt peremptorily *aſſerted*, by our eſtabliſhed church. What ſays the book of *Homilies*, when treating of the miſeries conſequent upon the fall? "This ſo great "and miſerable a plague, if it had only reſted on *A*- "*dam*, who firſt offended, it had been much eaſier, "and might the better have been borne. But it "fell not only on him, but alſo on his poſterity and "children for ever; ſo that the whole brood of *A*- "*dam*'s race ſhould ſuſtain the ſelf-ſame fall and pu- "niſhment, which their forefather by his offence moſt "juſtly had deſerved ‡."—Leſt any ſhould miſapprehend the deſign of our reformers, and ſuppoſe the puniſhment to conſiſt only of ſome bodily ſuffering, or the loſs of immortality, it is added in the ſame alarming diſcourſe: "Neither *Adam*, nor any of his, had any right "or intereſt at all in the kingdom of heaven; but "were become plain reprobates and caſtaways, being "perpetually damned to the everlaſting pains of hell."

Leſt you ſhould imagine, this might be written under a fally of haſty zeal, or that it is to be reckoned among the doting opinions of a credulous antiquity; let me remind my friend, that it is ingrafted into the *articles;* thoſe articles, which were approved by the archbiſhops and biſhops of both provinces; were ratified by the general conſent of the clergy; and are,

* Κριμα εις το κατακριμα. † Rom. ii. 3. iii. 8. & viii. 1.
‡ Homily on the nativity of *CHRIST.*

to this day, the *national ſtandard* of our belief. The ninth article, beginning with a deſcription of our depraved nature, ſubjoins an account of its proper deſert: "In every perſon born into the world, it deſerveth GOD's wrath and damnation *."

Ther. How *miſerable* then is man!

Aſp. In *himſelf* he is miſerable beyond expreſſion. But a conviction of this miſery is the beginning of all happineſs. *The valley of* Achor *is a door of hope* †.

Ther. Explain yourſelf, *Aſpaſio*. You ſeem to deal very much in the incomprehenſibles.

Aſp. Such a conviction would demonſtrate the *abſolute inſufficiency* of all human attainments, and all human endeavours, to procure life and ſalvation.—For, in caſe we could perform every jot and tittle of the divine law, offend in no inſtance, fall ſhort in no degree, perſevere to the very end; yet this would be no more than our preſent bounden duty. Not the leaſt pittance of merit could ariſe from all this. Much leſs could this be ſufficient to expiate original guilt, or remove the dreadful entail of the primitive all-deſtroying ſin.

This, therefore, would moſt effectually preclude every falſe confidence, and *ſweep away*, at one ſtroke, *every refuge of lies* ‡. It would lay us under an immediate, indiſpenſable,

* I am ſurpriſed to ſee a learned author attempting to *ſheath* the *ſting* of this awful denunciation; attempting to prove, that the words "do not ſignify GOD's eternal wrath, and the damnation of hell."—I ſhall take no pains to confute what he is pleaſed to advance. I leave the queſtion in the reader's own breaſt. Let him diſcover, if he can, a different meaning in the ſentence. Unleſs he has a pretty ſhrewd knack at *ſophiſtry*, I am perſuaded, he will find it a difficult matter to give *any other* tolerable turn to the paſſage.—Surely it muſt be a reproach to our venerable mother, if ſhe delivers her doctrine in language ſo *fallacious*, as muſt neceſſarily miſlead the generality of her ſons: or in terms ſo *abſtruſe*, as even a good underſtanding cannot develop, without ſome proficiency in critical legerdemain.

† Hoſ. ii. 15. *Achor* ſignifies *trouble*. ‡ Iſ. xxviii. 17.

dispensable, and happy necessity, of betaking ourselves to *CHRIST*.—I say *happy* necessity; because then we should know, by experience, what each part of our LORD's awful yet tender declaration meaneth; *O Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself; but in ME is thy help**.—We should then find, that as sin and misery have abounded through the first *Adam*, mercy and grace have *much more abounded* through the second. For, if we were ruined by a crime which we committed not, we are recovered by a righteousness which we performed not: A righteousness infinitely surpassing whatever we could have acquired; even though our nature had been transmitted to us, free from any depravity, and exempt from all guilt.

Ther. In your opinion then, and according to your scheme, *salve* and a *regimen* are better than a sound constitution.

Asp. No, *Theron*. My opinion is, that none can think himself aggrieved, or have any reason to complain, at that grand and beneficent regulation, which suffers the *glimmering* taper to be obscured or extinguished, but sheds abroad the *boundless* and *majestic* beams of day. And if any comparison be made between the most perfect human obedience, and the everlasting divine righteousness of *CHRIST*, it should be taken from the glimmering taper and the meridian sun.

Ther. I cannot persuade myself to admire such mysterious and unaccountable notions. They must puzzle some, will offend others; but cannot edify any.

Asp. This point, That *we all died in Adam*; were undone by his apostasy; cannot *puzzle* the simplest, if unprejudised mind.—Nor will it *offend* any but the proud philosopher, or the self-righteous moralist. And I assure you, I should not mention it, much less insist upon it, did it not subserve, and in a very singular manner, the purposes of *edification*. The doctrine of a REDEEMER obeying and dying in our stead, is the

* Hos. xiii. 9.

the very hinge and centre of all evangelical revelations; is the very life and soul of all evangelical blessings. This doctrine is not a little illustrated, and comes greatly recommended, by the imputation of *Adam*'s sin.

Contraries, you know, cast light upon, and set off each other. Winter and its severe cold, make spring and its chearing warmth more sensibly perceived, and more highly pleasing. Such an influence has the present subject, with respect to the vicarious obedience of our MEDIATOR. The more clearly we see the *reality* of the first, the more thoroughly we shall discern the *expediency*, the *excellency*, the *glory* of the last. The more we are humbled under a conviction of the former, the more we shall covet, or the more we shall triumph in, the enjoyment of the latter.—The apostle draws a long parallel, or rather forms a strong contrast between them, in the fifth chapter to the *Romans*. He speaks copiously of *Adam*'s guilt, imputed to all mankind for condemnation and death; that he may speak the more acceptably, the more charmingly of *CHRIST*'s righteousness, imputed to all believers for justification and life. In that *dark ground*, he well knew, this fairest loveliest flower of Christianity appears with *peculiar beauty*; indeed with all the beauty of consummate wisdom, and adorable benignity.

Ther. It really seems to me a thing *impossible*, that one man's righteousness should be made another's. Can one man live by the soul of another? or be learned by the learning of another?—Good *Aspasio*, never attempt to maintain such palpable absurdities. They will expose Christianity to the scorn of infidels.

Asp. If infidels scoff at this comfortable truth, their scoffing will be, like all their other cavils, not the *voice* of reason, but the *clamour* of prejudice.

My friend's objection insinuates, what we never assert, that the *essence* of this righteousness is *transfused* into believers: which would doubtless be in fact impossible

poſſible, as it is in theory abſurd.—But this we diſavow, as ſtrenuouſly as you can oppoſe. The REDEEMER's righteouſneſs is made ours, not by *infuſion*, but by *imputation*. The very terms we uſe, may acquit us from ſuch a ridiculous charge; as imputation ſignifies "a placing to the account of one, what is done by "another." Accordingly we believe, that the eſſence of this righteouſneſs abides in *CHRIST*, but is placed to our account; that *CHRIST*, and *CHRIST* alone, actually performed it; that *CHRIST*, and *CHRIST* alone, perſonally poſſeſſes it; but that performing it in our ſtead, and poſſeſſing it as our covenant-head, GOD imputes it to us,—GOD accepts us for it,—accepts us *as much*, *as if* we had, on our own behalf, and in our own perſons, ſeverally fulfilled it.

Though one man cannot live, be actuated with a principle of life, *by the ſoul* of another; yet you muſt allow, that one man, nay, that many men may live, be continued in the poſſeſſion of life, *for the righteouſneſs* of another. Or elſe you muſt do, what I am ſure you abhor;—you muſt charge with abſurdity and impoſſibility, even the declaration of the DEITY; *If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then will I ſpare all the place* FOR THEIR SAKES *.

Ther. Not all your refinements can reconcile me to this uncouth notion.—The practice is *unexampled*, and abſolutely inconſiſtent with the rules of *diſtributive* juſtice.

Aſp. Ah! my *Theron*, if we ſeek an example of GOD's unbounded goodneſs amongſt the puny proceedings of men, we ſhall be led into the moſt egregious miſapprehenſions. To meaſure one of the ſparks on your ring, and fancy we have taken the dimenſions of the *Alps* or the *Andes*, would be, in compariſon of this error, a ſmall miſtake. Since between a brilliant ſpeck, and a range of mountains, there is *ſome* proportion;

* Gen. xviii. 26.

portion; but between human beneficence, and this heavenly bounty, there cannot possibly be *any*.—However, the all-condescending CREATOR has been pleased, so to dispense his infinitely-rich grace, that we may find, though nothing parallel, nothing correspondent, yet some *faint* shadow of its *manner*, among the affairs of mankind; something that may perhaps give us such an idea of the stupendous subject, as a *glow-worm* would give of the sun's splendor, in case a person had never beheld that magnificent luminary.—This remark I must intreat you to recollect, whenever I attempt to *elucidate* the mysteries of the gospel, by the occurrences of common life.

When your worthy minister was disabled, by a rheumatic disorder, from attending on the business of his function, several of the neighbouring clergy gave him their assistance. Was he not, by this *vicarious* performance of his office, *entitled* to all the profits of his living?—It seems therefore not so unexampled a thing, for one person to act in another's stead. And when a service is thus discharged by the *proxy*, the benefit may, according to the received maxims of mankind, accrue to the *principal*.—Did not *Jehu*'s descendents, even to the fourth generation *, reap the advantage of their great grandfather's zeal? Does not the *Duke of* **** enjoy the honours and rewards, won by the sword of a victorious ancestor?—And may not the whole world of believers, with equal, with *far greater* justice, receive life and salvation, on account of their all-deserving SAVIOUR? Especially since he and they are one mystical body; represented as such in scripture, and considered as such by GOD.

No, say you: this is contrary to the rules of distributive justice.—What is your idea of a *SURETY*? How was the affair stated, and how were matters negotiated with relation to your generous acquaintance *Philander*? He, you know, was bound for an unfortunate brother, who lately stepped aside.

* 2 Kings x. 30.

Ther.

Ther. The debt, by his brother's abſconding, devolved upon *Philander*. He was reſponſible for all, and obliged to pay the whole ſum.

Aſp. Was not his payment *as ſatisfactory* to the creditor, as if it had been paid in the debtor's own perſon, by the debtor's own hand?

Ther. Certainly.

Aſp. Was not the debtor by this vicarious payment, releaſed from all fear of proſecution, and *acquitted* from any future demand on this ſcore?

Ther. He was.

Aſp. Apply this inſtance to the redemption of ſinners by *JESUS CHRIST;* who is, in the ſacred writings, expreſsly ſtyled a *SURETY* *.—If *Philander*'s act was deemed, in the eſtimation of law, the act of his brother; if the deed of the former was imputed, in point of advantage, entirely to the latter; why ſhould not the ſame effects take place, with regard to the divine bondſman, and poor inſolvent ſinners? Why ſhould *that* be exploded in our ſyſtems of divinity, which is univerſally admitted in our courts of juſtice?

Ther. Obedience and righteouſneſs are, in the nature of the things themſelves, *perſonal* qualities, and *only* ſo. Every man is that only (and can be nothing elſe) which he is in himſelf.

Aſp. Righteouſneſs, as *dwelling in* us, is undoubtedly a perſonal quality; and obedience, as *performed by* us, comes under the ſame denomination. But does this ſuperſede the neceſſity, or deſtroy the exiſtence of imputed righteouſneſs?—Your firſt propoſition is ambiguous. Let it ſpeak diſtinctly; add *inherent* to your righteouſneſs; and the ſenſe becomes determinate, but the argument falls to the ground.

"Every man is that only (and can be nothing elſe) "which he is in himſelf."—If I had never ſeen the Bible, I ſhould have yielded my ready aſſent to this propoſition.

* Heb. vi. 22.

propoſition. But, when I open the Old Teſtament, and find it written by the prophet, *In the LORD ſhall all the houſe of Iſrael be juſtified* *; when I turn to the New Teſtament, and hear the apoſtle ſaying, *Ye are complete in HIM, who is the head of all principalities and powers* †; I cannot concur with *Theron*, without contradicting revelation.—*Iſrael*, or the true believer, is ſaid to be juſtified; and the foundation of this bleſſing is declared to be, not in himſelf, but in the LORD. The *Coloſſians* are ſaid to be complete; which, we are very certain, they were not in themſelves; and are expreſsly aſſured, they were ſo in *CHRIST*.—Hence it appears quite contrary to my friend's aſſertion, that ſinners both *have* and *are* that in *CHRIST*, which they neither have nor are in themſelves. They have, by imputation, *a righteouſneſs* in *CHRIST*; they are, by this imputed righteouſneſs, *complete* before GOD.

I believe, your miſtake proceeds from neglecting to diſtinguiſh between INHERENT and IMPUTED.—We never ſuppoſe, that a profane perſon is devout, or an intemperate perſon ſober. This is *inherent* righteouſneſs.—But we maintain, that the profane and intemperate, being convinced of their iniquity, and betaking themſelves to the all-ſufficient SAVIOUR for redemption, are intereſted in the merit both of his life and of his death. This is *imputed* righteouſneſs.—We farther affirm, that tho' really abominable in themſelves, they are fully accepted by GOD, for his beloved SON's ſake. This is *juſtification* thro' imputed righteouſneſs.

However ſtrange this may ſeem, it is no precarious or unwarrantable opinion, but the clear and poſitive declaration of ſcripture. *He juſtifieth*, he abſolves from guilt, he treats as righteous—*Whom?* Upright, obedient, ſinleſs creatures? This were nothing extraordinary

* Iſ. xlv. 25. † Col. ii. 10.

ordinary—No; but *he juſtifieth the ungodly* *, *that believe* in the *LORD JESUS*; imputing as the ground of this juſtification, *their* treſpaſſes to him, and *his* righteouſneſs to them.

Ther. I ſee no occaſion for ſuch *nice* diſtinctions, and *metaphyſical* ſubtilties, in plain popular divinity. Hard terms and abſtruſe notions may perplex the head, but ſeldom improve the heart.

Aſp. Why then do you oblige us to make uſe of them? If ſome people twiſt and entangle the reins, it behoves others to *clear* them of the embarraſſment, and *replace* them in their due order.—Many writers, either from an artful deſign, or thro' a ſtrange inadvertence, have jumbled and confounded theſe two very different ideas. Hence they have ſtarted objections to our doctrine, which, the moment you introduce this obvious diſtinction, vaniſh into air. They fall into a miſtake of their own, and then charge the abſurdity upon others.

I am no more fond of hard terms, and abſtruſe notions, than my *Theron*. Neither can I think the inſtance before us ſo abſtruſe a notion. I am very certain, you are capable of comprehending much higher and nicer reſinements. Therefore I muſt once again intreat you to remember the very material difference between *inherent* and *imputed* righteouſneſs. The former is the eſſence of ſanctification; the latter is the ground of juſtification. By *this*, we are reſtored to the favour of GOD; by *that*, we are made meet for his heavenly kingdom. Let this diſtinction, which is eaſy, which is ſcriptural, which is important, take place; and we may for the future diſmiſs what you call, the metaphyſical ſubtilties. Our diſagreement will ceaſe, and our opinions tally.

Ther. I queſtion that, *Aſpaſio*. There are other difficulties to be got over, before I can digeſt ſo crude an opinion.—If we are juſtified by the righteouſneſs of

* Rom. iv. 5.

CHRIST, then the righteousness which justifies mankind is *already* wrought out.

Asp. And this you take to be a most enormous falsehood. Whereas, I look upon it as a most delightful truth.—The righteousness which justifies sinful man, was *set on foot*, when GOD sent forth his SON from the habitation of his holiness and glory, to be born of a woman, and made subject to the law.—It was *carried on*, through the whole course of our SAVIOUR's life; in which he always did such things, as were pleasing to his heavenly FATHER.—It was *completed* at that ever-memorable, that grand period of time, when the blessed *EMMANUEL* bowed his dying head; and cried, with a strong triumphant voice, IT IS FINISHED.

If the justifying righteousness was to be wrought by *ourselves*, we could never be truly and fully justified till death; till our warefare is accomplished, and our *last* act of obedience exerted.—But how uncomfortable is such a notion! How miserable would it render our lives! And how directly does it run counter to the determination of the apostle, *Ye* ARE *justified* *!

Ther. Soothed then with this pleasing surmise, may not the *libertine* say to his soul?—"Soul, take thine "ease in the most indolent security. All my carnal "appetites, indulge yourselves without restraint. Con-"science, be under no solicitude to live soberly, righ-"teously, and godlily. For the work *is done; all* "*done* to my hands. I am like some fortunate heir, "whose parents have been successfully industrious; "and have left nothing to exercise the diligence of "their surviving son, but only to possess the inheri-"tance, and live on labours not his own."

Asp. The libertine, who only speculates or disputes, may indeed abuse the *doctrine* of grace. But the believer, who feels the *power* of grace, will improve it to better purposes. Where the former only *fluctuates* in the understanding, such detestable consequences may ensue.

* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

enſue. Where the latter *operates* on the heart, it will always produce very different effects. Such a perſon, from ſuch a faith, will be no more inclined to inactivity or licentiouſneſs, than our buſy humming companions are inclined, by this bright ſunſhine and all thoſe expanded bloſſoms, to *ſleep away* their hours in the hive. And you may as ſoon expect to ſee theſe colonies of the ſpring, ſwarming in *December*, clinging to an icicle, or diſperſing themſelves to gather honey on the ſnow; as to ſee a truly-gracious man, who *is dead to ſin, living any longer therein* *. Whoever, therefore, ſo ſhamefully *perverts* ſo ſweet and glorious a doctrine, is a witneſs againſt himſelf, that he has neither lot nor portion in the ineſtimable privilege. If an animal ſuck poiſon from the moſt wholeſome herbs, we are ſure, from that infallible indication, it is the vile ſpider, or ſome envenomed inſect, not the valuable and induſtrious bee.

Ther. Truly, *Aſpaſio*, I know not how to call that doctrine ſweet, much leſs can I recommend it as wholeſome, which renders repentance, perſonal reformation, and inherent rectitude, *needleſs*. And if your tenet is once received, all theſe duties may fairly be diſmiſſed. So that if the thing was poſſible, yet it would be *pernicious*.

Aſp. The prophet was of another mind: *They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn* †. Sinners ſhall look, by faith, to their crucified LORD; ſhall ſee him faſtened with nails to the curſed tree; ſee him ſtabbed to the heart by the bloody ſpear. And *remembering*, that this was the puniſhment due to their provocations; *believing*, that, by this puniſhment, they are freed from all penal ſufferings, and entitled to all ſpiritual bleſſings; they ſhall not be tempted to tranſgreſs, but incited to mourn; not play the profligate, but act the penitent.—The apoſtle exactly agrees with the prophet; and both are diametrically oppoſite to my friend; *The goodneſs*, the tranſcendent and amazing goodneſs of

* Rom. vi. 2. † Zech. xi. 10.

of *GOD* our *SAVIOUR*, instead of diverting from, *leadeth to repentance* *.

Far from obstructing, it powerfully promotes, *personal reformation*. For thus saith that all-wise BEING, who intimately knows our frame, and discerns what is most effectual to work upon our minds; *The grace of GOD, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared; teaching us, that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present evil world* †. Grace, you observe, even that gloriously-free grace, which bringeth salvation to unworthy creatures, is a diffusive of all vice, and an encouragement to every virtue.

As to *inherent rectitude*, how can that be rendered needless by imputed righteousness? Is health rendered insignificant, by the abundance of our riches? Does ease become superfluous, through the beauty of our apparel?—Holiness is the *health* of our souls, and the *ease* of our minds. Whereas, ungovernable passions create keener anguish, than a brood of vipers gnawing our bosoms. Inordinate desires are a more intolerable nuisance, than swarms of locusts infesting our abodes. To regulate *those*, and to restrain *these*, can never be needless, till comfort and sorrow change their properties; till the diabolical nature becomes equally desirable with the divine.

Ther. The believer, indeed, out of mere generosity, *may*, if he please, add works of righteousness of his own. But his main interest is secure without them.

Asp. Rather, *Theron*, he *must* out of duty, he *will* out of gratitude, and from the new disposition of his nature he *cannot but*, add to his faith works of righteousness.

How runs the heavenly *edict*, in this case made and provided? *I will that they who have believed in GOD, be careful to maintain good works* ‡.—How beats the *pulse* of a be-

* Rom. ii. 4. † Tit. ii. 11, 12.

‡ *Tit.* iii. 8. The original word προϊστασθαι has a beauty and

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a believing soul? You may feel it, in that truly generous demand, made by the *Psalmist: What shall I render unto the LORD for all the benefits that he hath done unto me* *? A grateful heart wants not the goad, but is a spur to itself.—How leans the *bias* of his nature! He is new-born; created in *CHRIST JESUS* unto good works †; his delight is in the law of the Lord ‡. And whatever is our supreme delight, we are sure to prosecute, and prosecute with ardour. *We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard* ‖, was the profession of the apostles; and, if applied to practical godliness, is the experience of the *Christian*.

Nor can his main interest be secure without a holy obedience. Because the Judge of the world, at the day of eternal retribution, will declare to the workers of iniquity; *I never knew you; depart from me* †: Because holiness, though not the cause of our admittance to the beatific vision, is so necessary a qualification, that *without it no man shall see the LORD* ††. Without it, there is no access to heaven, neither could there be any enjoyment in heaven.

Ther. Pray, recollect yourself, *Aspasio*. According to the tenor of your own illustration, the necessity of *personal*

an energy, which, I believe, it is impossible for our language to preserve, by any literal translation. It implies, that a believer should not only be exercised in, but eminent for, all good works; should *shew* others the way, and *outstrip* them in the honourable race; be both a *pattern*, and a *patron* of universal godliness.

* Psal. cxvi. 12. † Eph. ii. 10. ‡ Psal i. 2.

‖ *Cannot but*—This is an expression used by the apostles, *Acts* iv. 20. It describes the genuine and habitual propensity of their *new* nature. As the compassionate bowels cannot but yearn at spectacles of misery; as the benevolent heart cannot but dilate with pleasure, at the sight of a brother's happiness; so the new creature in *CHRIST* cannot but *desire* to glorify and *delight* to obey, the ever-blessed GOD.

† Matt. vii. 23. †† Heb. xii. 14.

personal obedience is evidently vacated. For how can the law demand a debt of the principal, which has been fully discharged by the surety?

Asp. The debt of penal suffering, and the debt of perfect obedience, are fully discharged by our divine SURETY: so that we are no longer under a necessity of obeying, in order to obtain an exemption from punishment, or to lay the foundation for our final acceptance. We are nevertheless engaged, by many other obligations, to walk in all dutiful and conscientious regard to the law. Because—this is the most authentic proof of our love to the gracious REDEEMER; *If ye love me, keep my commandments* *:—This is a comfortable evidence of our union with that exalted head? *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit* †:—This is also the most effectual method of adorning our profession, of magnifying its Author, and of winning our neighbours to embrace the gospel; *Let your light*, the light of your exemplary conversation, not only appear, but *shine before men; that they, seeing your good works*, may think honourably of your religion ‡; *may glorify your FATHER which is in heaven;* and say, with those proselytes mentioned by the prophet, *We will go with you.*

Do we then make void the law, through the imputed righteousness of our LORD? No, verily: but—if gratitude to our dying SAVIOUR have any constraining influence; if a concern for our own comfort have any persuasive energy; if there be any thing inviting, any thing desirable in the prospect of honouring GOD, and edifying man,—*we establish the law.* By all these generous, manly, endearing motives, we enforce its precepts, and provide for its observance.

Ther.

* John xiv. 15. † John xv. 5.

‡ *Matth.* v. 16. Therefore, by our LORD in this place, and by St *Paul* in his epistle to *Titus*, good works are called καλα ἐργα *graceful, beauteous, ornamental.*

Ther. Should we admit this doctrine, mankind could no longer be considered as in themselves, and solely in themselves *accountable* creatures. Nor would the future judgment be an *equitable* distribution of rewards and punishments; but only GOD's awful and uncontrollable execution of his own arbitrary and irreversible decrees.

Asp. I have never been accustomed to consider mankind, under the gospel-dispensation, as accountable *solely* in themselves: because, in this comfortable and benign scheme, a MEDIATOR intervenes; undertakes to answer for his people; and bears the *chastisement of their peace.*—Were we accountable solely in ourselves, *CHRIST*, as our great HIGH PRIEST, would be set aside; and his sacrifice, as a propitiation for sin, be of none effect.

Why may not the future judgment be an equitable distribution of rewards and punishments? If those who reject the atonement of the dying *JESUS*, and refuse to depend on his consummate righteousness, are left to stand or fall according to the issue of their own obedience; if believers, on the other hand, are accepted through their most meritorious REDEEMER; but rewarded with higher or inferior degrees of felicity, in proportion to the sanctity of their nature, and usefulness of their lives:—I see nothing arbitrary in this procedure; but an admirable mixture of just severity, and free goodness;—on those who reject the atonement, *just severity;*—to those who rely on their SAVIOUR, *free goodness.*

Ther. The obedience of *CHRIST* was *wholly* due for himself; and therefore could not merit for another.

Asp. A bold assertion this! Whoever can make it good, will infallibly overthrow my opinion; and, at the same time, destroy all my hopes. But surely, *Theron*, it is not your real sentiment.

Could it then be matter of duty in the eternal SON, to be borne of a woman; and in the LORD of lords,

to become the servant of all? Could it be matter of duty in the KING of glory, to embrace the infamy of the cross; and in the PRINCE of life, to pour out his soul unto death?—If all this was matter of duty, the ever-blessed *JESUS* (how shall I speak it? who can believe it?) was no better than an *unprofitable* servant. For such is the acknowledged character of every one who does no more than is his duty to do *.

Ther. Not so fast, not quite so vehement, my friend. Remember what the scripture affirms. *CHRIST* is said to receive a *commandment*, and be *subject* to the law: both which expressions evidently imply duty.

Asp. In order to accomplish our redemption, the SON of GOD submitted himself to the authority of the law, and became obedient to its precepts. But this was his own *spontaneous* act; the matter of his *free* choice; to which he lay under no manner of obligation, till he engaged to be our Surety.

Being in the form of GOD, he was Lord of the law; and no more subject to its commands, than obnoxious to its curse. Nevertheless *he took upon him the form of a servant;* and *was made under the law*. Wherefore? *That he might* obtain everlasting life and glory for himself? No; but that he might *redeem those who were under the law* †. From which it appears, that both his engagement and his obedience were, not for himself, but for his people. Therefore the prophet cries out, with holy exultation, *To us a child is born; to us a Son is given* ‡! His incarnate state and human nature, together with all that he did and suffered in both, were for us; *those* assumed on our account, *these* referred to our advantage.

Let us consider this, and be amazed, and be charmed.—The great universal LORD vouchsafes to pay universal

* Luke xvii. 10. † Gal. iv. 5.

‡ *Isa.* ix. 6. *Est præterea emphasis singularis in voce* nobis. *Significat id, quod omnes sentiunt,* nostro bonno et commodo *natum esse hunc Puerum Imperatorem.* VITRING. in loc.

universal obedience! What *condescension* was here!—He vouchsafes to pay it, for us men, and for our redemption! What *goodness* was this!

Ther. Before we indulge the devotional strain, we should take care that our devotion is founded on *rational* principles; otherwise it may prove, like the flash of a sky-rocket, transient and momentary.

Asp. For this, I think, there is a solid foundation in reason, as well as scripture. As soon as the man *CHRIST JESUS* was united to the second person of the TRINITY, he must have, by virtue of that union, an unquestionable right to everlasting life and glory. Therefore he could be under no necessity of obeying, in order to procure either honour or happiness for *himself*. But all that he performed in conformity to the preceptive part of the law, he performed under the character of a *public person*; in the place, and for the benefit of his spiritual seed; that they might be interested in it, and justified by it.

Ther. Be it so: the believer is interested in *CHRIST*'s righteousness.—Pray, is he interested in all, or only in part?—If in *all*, then every believer is equally righteous, and equally to be rewarded. Which is contrary to an allowed maxim, That there will be different allotments of happiness in the heavenly world.—If in *part* only, how will you ascertain the degree? what proportion belongs to this person, and what to the other?—Either way, your scheme is inextricably embarrassed.

Asp. The reply to my *Theron*'s inquiry is easy; and the embarrassment he mentions, is but imaginary.—Every true believer is interested in *all CHRIST*'s righteousness; in the *whole* merit of his spotless nature, of his perfect obedience, and expiatory death.

Less than the whole would be unavailable. Whereas the whole renders us completely justified.

You are a great admirer of anatomy, *Theron*, and must undoubtedly remember the very peculiar struc-

ture of the *ear*. Other parts of the body are progreſſive in their growth. Their bulk is proportioned to the infantile, or manly age. But the organs of hearing, I have been informed, are *preciſely* of the *ſame* ſize, in the feeble infant, and the confirmed adult.—Juſtification likewiſe, being abſolutely neceſſary to a ſtate of acceptance with GOD, is, in every ſtage of the Chriſtian courſe, and even in the firſt dawn of ſincere faith, complete. With regard to the *exiſtence* of the privilege, there is no difference * in the babes, the young men, the fathers in *CHRIST*. The *perception*, the *aſſurance*, the comfortable *enjoyment* of the mercy, may increaſe; but the mercy itſelf is incapable of augmentation.

The various advances in ſanctification account for the *various degrees* of future glory; and not account for them only, but render them entirely reaſonable, and, according to our apprehenſion of things, unavoidable.—As to the ſettling the *proportion*, we may ſafely leave that to the ſupreme ARBITRATOR. He, who *meteth out the heavens with a ſpan*, and *ſetteth a compaſs upon the face of the deep*, cannot be at a loſs to adjuſt this particular.

Ther. The organs of hearing, though not preciſely, are *very nearly*, of the ſame bulk, in the babe and the man. They acquire, from advancing years, ſcarce any thing more than an increaſe of ſolidity. So that I make no objection to your illuſtration, but to your doctrine.

If

* To the ſame purpoſe ſpeaks one of our moſt celebrated divines; as great an adept in ſacred literature, as ages have produced.—"All are juſtified *alike*; the *truth* of faith juſtifying, not the *meaſure*. Juſtification therefore is the ſame "in all that believe; tho' their belief be in different degrees. "So, once in the wilderneſs, all gathered not manna in the "ſame meaſure; yet, when all came to meaſure, they had all "alike; none above an omer, none under."

LIGHTFOOT, vol. II. p. 1052.

If *CHRIST* has done all, and we are entitled to his whole merits only by believing; to be saved, must be the *easiest* thing in the world. Whereas the Bible represents Christianity, as a *race* and a *warfare*, a state of conflict and a course of striving.—In good truth, *Aspasio*, you prophecy pleasing things. Divinity is not your profession; or else, I should number you among "the smooth, emollient, downy doctors." For, according to the articles of your creed, there is no more difficulty in securing heaven, than in rising from our seat.

Asp. A *speculative* assent to all the principles of religion, is, I acknowledge, a very easy matter. It *may*, it *must* exist, wherever there is a tolerable capacity for reasoning, and a due attention to evidence.—This notional faith forced its way into the breast of *Simon* the sorcerer *; and extorted a confession from the dying lips of *Julian* † the apostate. Irresistible as the stroke of lightning, terrible also as its fiery glare, it flashes conviction into the very devils. Even those execrable spirits *believe and tremble* ‡.

But the faith, which, far from resting in speculation, exalts the desires, regulates the passions, and refines the whole conversation;—the faith which, according to the expressive language of scripture, *purifies the heart, overcomes the world, and sets the affections on things*

* Acts viii. 13.

† It is related in ecclesiastical history, that when the Emperor *Julian* was setting out upon his *Parthian* expedition, he threatened to persecute the *Christians* with the utmost severity, as soon as he returned victorious.—Upon this occasion, *Libanius* the rhetorician asked one of them with an insulting air; *What the carpenter's son was doing, while such a storm hung over his followers? The carpenter's son*, replied the Christian, *is making a coffin for your Emperor.*—The event proved to be *prophetic*. For in an engagement with the enemy, that royal but wretched apostate was mortally wounded; and cried, with his expiring breath, *Vicisti, O Galilæe! I am vanquished, O Galilean! thy right hand hath the pre-eminence!*

‡ Jam. ii. 19.

things above;—this truly noble and triumphant faith is no such easy acquisition. This is the gift of an infinite BENEFACTOR; the work of a divine AGENT: called, therefore, by way of supereminent distinction, *faith of the operation of GOD* *; because GOD himself, by the effectual working of his mighty power, produces it in the human soul.

The exercise of this faith, I would not compare to an active gentleman, rising from his seat; but rather to a *shipwrecked* mariner, labouring to gain some place of safety.—He espies a large *rock*, which rears its head above the boisterous flood. To this he bears away, and to this he approaches; but whirling winds, and dashing waves, drive him back to an unhappy distance.—Exerting all his strength, he advances nearer still; and attempts to climb the desirable eminence. When a sweeping surge interposes, and drenches him again in the rolling deep.—By determined efforts, he recovers the space he had lost. Now he fastens on the cliff, and has almost escaped the danger. But there is such a numbness in his limbs, that he cannot maintain his hold; and such an impetuous swell in the ocean, that he is once more dislodged, and plunged afresh into the raging billows.—What can he do? His life, his precious life, is at stake. He must renew, still renew, and never intermit his endeavours.—Neither let him abandon himself to despair. The MASTER sees him, amidst all his fruitless toil. Let him cry earnestly, *LORD, save me, I perish!* and HE, who commandeth the winds and the waves, will be sure to put forth his beneficent hand, and rescue him from the devouring sea.

Such, my friend, so *painful*, so *assiduous* are the struggles of faith, before it can rest, in peaceful security, on the *Rock of Ages*, *CHRIST JESUS*. Of this you may, some time or other, be assured, not only from my lips, but from your own experience.

Ther.

* Col. ii. 12.

Ther. What may happen in ſome future period of time, is beyond my power to foreſee. At preſent, I am apt to think, we muſt put a ſtop to the theological lecture. Don't you remember our engagement with *Altinous?* and you will own, that punctuality in performing our promiſes, is at leaſt a *moral* virtue, if it be not a *Chriſtian* grace.

DIALOGUE VI.

ASPASIO's affairs called him to *London*. He ſtaid in town a few days: but as ſoon as buſineſs was finiſhed, he quitted the city, and haſtened to his friend's *country-ſeat*.—Upon his arrival, he found ſome agreeable company, that came on purpoſe to ſpend the evening with the family. This incident prevented the immediate proſecution of their ſubject.—As the next morning proved miſty, and unfit for walking abroad, *Theron* invited *Aſpaſio* to paſs an hour in his *ſtudy*.

It was ſituate at the extremity of a large gallery: which, while it conducted the feet to a repoſitory of learning, interpoſed between the ear, and all the diſturbance of domeſtic affairs: ſo that you are accommodated with every thing that may *regale* a ſtudious mind; and incommoded with nothing that may *interrupt* a ſedate attention.—*Aſpaſio* readily conſented to the propoſal; but deſired, firſt, to take a turn in this beautiful *oblong*, and divert himſelf with the decorations of the place.

Aſp. A very ſhort ſurvey, *Theron*, is ſufficient to diſcover the correctneſs of your judgment, and the true delicacy of your taſte.—Here are no *impertinent* and *frivolous* exhibitions of romantic tales, or poetic ſtories. Here are no *indecent* pieces of imagery, that tend to corrupt a chaſte, or inflame a wanton fancy.—On the contrary, I am preſented with a collection of maps,

maps, accurately drawn by the moſt able hands; and with ſeveral remarkable tranſactions of antiquity, moſt eloquently told in the language of the pencil.—You have happily hit that grand point, which the gentleman of refinement, as well as the author of genius, ſhould ever keep in view,—the union of the *beneficial* with the *delightful* *.

Ther. Indeed, my *Aſpaſio*, I have often been diſappointed, ſometimes even ſhocked, in the gardens, the porticoes, and the walks of ſome modern *virtuoſi*. Their portraits and ſtatues are little elſe, but an aſſemblage of elaborate trifles. *Ixion* ſtretched upon the wheel, or *Phaeton* precipitated from the chariot. *Apollo* ſtringing his lyre, or *Jupiter* (I beg his ſupreme highneſs's pardon, for not giving him the precedence in my catalogue) beſtriding his eagle, and balancing his bolts.—Pray, where is the advantage of being introduced to this *fabulous* tribe of gentry? What noble idea can they awaken, or what valuable impreſſion leave upon the mind? The beſt we can ſay of ſuch performances, is, that they are limning and ſculpture expenſively thrown away.

This celebrated trumpery one can bear with, however. But, when the painting and ſculpture, inſtead of cultivating virtue, and improving our morals, are calculated to be the very *bane* of both,—will you call *this* an elegant entertainment? No: 'tis a nuiſance; 'tis a peſt.—In the *ſtatues*, I grant, every dimple ſinks, and every muſcle ſwells, with the exacteſt propriety. The countenance is animated with life, and the limbs are ready to ſtart into motion.—The *picture*, I am ſenſible, is as highly finiſhed as the effigy; the diſtributions of light and ſhade moſt artfully adjuſted; the diminutions of the perſpective true to a nicety; nor can any thing exceed the eaſy flow of the robe, unleſs it be the graceful attitude, and almoſt-ſpeaking aſpect, of the principal figure.—But is this *maſterly* execution an

* *Omne tulit punctum, qui miſcuit utile dulci.* HOR.

an equivalent for the most *malignant* effects? for sullying the purity of my fancy, and poisoning the powers of my imagination?

Is it an indication of the owner's *judicious* taste, to prefer regularity of features in the hammered block, before orderly and harmonious affections in his own breast? Does it bespeak a *refined* disposition, or a *benevolent* temper, to be so extravagantly enamoured with the touches of a lascivious pencil, as to expose them in the most frequented passages, and obtrude them on every unwary guest?—Surely, this can create no very advantageous opinion of a gentleman's *intellectual* discernment. Much less can it raise an amiable idea of his *moral* character *. On such occasions, I am strongly tempted to suspect, that real honour is a stranger, where common decency † is wanting.

As for the artist, one can hardly forbear execrating his hateful folly who could *prostitute* such fine talents to such infamous purposes.—Detested be the chisel! that teaches, though with inimitable dexterity, the cold obdurate marble to enkindle dissolute affections.—Abhorred be the pencil! that makes no other use of the most lovely colours, than to pollute the canvas, and insnare the spectator.

It is argued, I know, that many of those pieces are the completest models extant.—An *everlasting reproach* this to the art; but no apology for the performances. Since the more nicely they are executed, the more mischievous

* 'Tis pity but the advice of *Cicero*, that great master of elegant taste, and polite manners, was received as a *standard* of regulation, by all our connoisseurs in the fine arts. *In primis provideat ne ornamenta* ædicm atque hortorum *vitium aliquod indicent inesse moribus. De Offic.*

† A gentleman, observing some gross indelicacies of this kind, at the seat of a person of distinction, very acutely (and, I believe too justly) said,

His paintings are the gibbet *of his name.*

miſchievous * is their influence. It ſtrikes the ſurer, and ſinks the deeper. It dreſſes deſtruction gay, and paves with beauty the way to ruin.

It is my chief ambition, *Aſpaſio*, to have all my decorations ſo circumſtanced, that the beholder may learn ſome *valuable leſſon* in morality, or be reminded of ſome *important event* in hiſtory; may find, even in

* I hope it will not be thought improper, I wiſh it was entirely needleſs, to animadvert upon a practice, which is, not only a reproach to our *Chriſtian profeſſion*, but an inſult upon *national decorum*: the practice of expoſing to public view and offering to public ſale, ſuch ſhameful *prints*, as are fitted only to awaken licentious deſires, and cheriſh the moſt profligate diſpoſitions.

Such ſpectacles are a ſpecies of the *rankeſt* poiſon. And can the poiſon be leſs pernicious, becauſe it is received at the eye, inſtead of paſſing through the lips? becauſe it tends *more immediately* to debauch the morals, and *but remotely* to deſtroy the conſtitution?—No wonder, ſo many of our youths are corrupted, and ſo many robberies committed, while ſuch ſcenes of pictured lewdneſs are ſuffered to inflame them with luſt, and habituate them to impudence.

Another very indecent cuſtom has unaccountably ſtole its way into ſeveral performances of genius and elegance. The cuſtom I mean, of repreſenting the *Muſes*, the *Graces*, and other romantic perſonages, in the form of beautiful ladies, partly, if not entirely, naked.—'Tis true, here are no looſe adventures; no immodeſt geſtures; nay more, the artiſt expreſſes *his own*, and conſults *your* modeſty, by preſenting you with a poſition in profile, by the intervention of a foliage, or the lappet of a robe.—But let me aſk the ingenious operator, If he would chuſe to introduce his wife or his daughter, in *ſuch* a manner, to public company?—Is he ſtartled at the queſtion? is he ſhocked at the thought? Then let him reflect, and let others conſider, whether *that* can be graceful or allowable in a picture, which would be brutal and unſufferable in common life?

Socrates (who before his application to philoſophy, practiſed as a ſtatuary) could not but bluſh at this abuſe of his art; and, being to form a repreſentation of the *Graces*, he repreſented them properly *habited*.

in the ſcenes of his amuſement, ſomething to eſtabliſh his virtue, or enlarge his knowledge.

I frequently entertain my eldeſt ſon, who is reading the *Greek* and *Latin* hiſtorians, with an explanation of my principal drawings; that he may behold in colouring, what he has peruſed in narrative.—At this inſtant the youth happened to make his appearance; paying his reſpects to *Aſpaſio*, and dutifully ſaluting his father.—It juſt recurs to my memory, ſaid *Theron*, that ſome neceſſary affairs of the family require my attendance for a few minutes. Will you excuſe my abſence, good *Aſpaſio*; and permit my ſon to ſupply my place?

You will very much oblige me, by leaving me ſuch a companion.—And come, my dear Sir, addreſſing himſelf to *Eugenio*, as I know you are a lover of learning, what think you of diverting ourſelves with theſe agreeable books? which give us their inſtructive leſſons, not in puzzling languages, but in pleaſing colours.—*Eugenio* ſpoke his conſent, and expreſſed his modeſty, by a becoming bluſh, while *Aſpaſio* proceeded—

Aſp. This is a ſtriking picture indeed! Hills piled on hills form a moſt aſtoniſhing proſpect. What *horrible magnificence* reigns amidſt thoſe wild and ſhaggy rocks! Nature ſeems to have deſigned them for the boundaries of the world. Yet thoſe daring troops are attempting to paſs the prodigious barrier. Who are they, *Eugenio*, and whom ſhall we call their leader?

Eug. This, Sir, is the famous *Hannibal*, heading and encouraging his army in the paſſage of the *Alps*. The ſons of *Africa* ſeem to ſhiver with cold as they traverſe thoſe frozen regions, and march among the clouds.

Aſp. 'Tis the very ſame. Some, you obſerve, climb, with exceſſive toil, the ſteep and craggy cliffs. Others, with far greater difficulty, deſcend through dreadful

declivities of ice; expoſed, all the while, to the arrows of the mountaineers.—Some, endeavouring to avoid the ſhowers of ſteel, ſlip with their feet, and tumble headlong down the vaſt projecting promontories. See! from what a height they are falling! carriages and their drivers, the horſe and his rider! and at what a diſtance ſtill, from the ſtony abyſs below!—Some lie with cloſed eyelids, and ghaſtly features, daſhed to death at the very bottom. Others, writhing with the torture of mangled limbs, and broken bones, lift up an agonizing look to their comrades. Their comrades, inſenſible of a brother's miſery, and wholly intent upon their own preſervation, hang frightfully ſuſpended on the edges of the precipice. The precipice ſeems to totter as they cling; and the alarmed ſpectator expects, every moment a hideous downfal.—Are you not ſtartled at the view, *Eugenio*, and in pain for the hardy adventurers?

Eug. I am, Sir. And I wonder, how they will extricate themſelves from theſe perilous circumſtances. I have read in *Livy*, that they cut their way through the rocks, after they had ſoftened them with *vinegar*. But is this probable? how could they procure a ſufficient quantity, amidſt thoſe deſolate mountains?

Aſp. I believe, their *reſolution* and their *perſeverance* were the vinegar. Theſe open a road through rocks. Theſe, under the conduct of prudence, and the favour of heaven*, ſurmount all obſtacles. Influenced by theſe,

* Under the *favour of heaven*.—I cannot but wiſh, that the relator of *Lord Anſon's voyage round the world*, had anticipated *Aſpaſio's* remark; had made ſome grateful acknowledgments to an interpoſing PROVIDENCE, in that maſculine, nervous, noble narrative:—A narrative of ſuch ſignal deliverances, ſo critically timed, and ſo ſurpriſingly circumſtanced, as, in the courſe of one expedition, are ſcarcely to be paralleled.

I am perſuaded, it would have been no diſparagement of the great commander, and his gallant officers, to have it thankfully

these, the survivors press boldly on; and are determined to vanquish the horrors of nature, as a prelude to their victory over the forces of *Rome*. Let these, resolution and perseverance I mean, be the companions of my *Eugenio*'s youthful studies, and they will enable him also to conquer difficulties,—even all the difficulties which lie in his way.

What is our next draught? At each end we have a group of living figures. All the intermediate space is an extensive tract of land, diversified only by rapid rivers, horrid deserts, and mountainous ridges; with here and there a few savage natives, in uncouth dresses, and formidable arms.—It is more like a *map*, than a *picture*. And the most remarkable beauty is, the *aereal perspective*; which puts a very agreeable cheat upon our eyes; causing us to behold, on an ell of canvas, the space of many hundreds of miles.

Eug. This represents *the retreat of the ten thousand* Greeks. First we behold them in the plains of *Media*; at an immense distance from their native country; without guides; without provision; and, what is the most desperate calamity of all, deprived of their ablest officers by treachery and murder.—Well may they look dejected. How have I pitied them, as I read their story! abhorred the perfidy of their enemies, and wished

fully recognized, on some very unexpected, yet most advantageous turn of affairs, THIS HATH GOD DONE!—Neither could it have detracted from the merit of the brave sailors, to have confessed, on many hazardous emergencies, that all their resolution, all their address, and the exertion of their utmost abilities, had been only *lost labour*, without the remarkable co-operation of divine goodness.—And I am apprehensive, that it must considerably diminish the delight of many readers, to observe the blessed AUTHOR of *all* these mercies passed by unnoticed, unacknowledged, and without *any* share of the praise.

The sarcasm on Pope *Adrian* and his exploits, I fear, would be too proper on this occasion, *Hic DEUS nihil fecit.*

wiſhed them all ſucceſs in their hazardous enterpriſe!

Aſp. Don't you perceive, their drooping ſpirits begin to revive, and ſome gleam of hope diffuſes itſelf through their countenances, while they liſten to the eloquent *Xenophon?* who ſtands conſpicuous in the midſt, harranguing his ſoldiers, and rouſing their courage. But, ah! what a vaſt extent of unknown climes muſt they traverſe, with a numerous and victorious army, haraſſing them in flank, or hanging upon their rear? What fatigues muſt they ſuſtain, what hardſhips endure, before they arrive at their wiſhed-for home? —*Home!* Fired by the enchanting name, and animated by their brave philoſophic leader, they reſolve to puſh their way through all the extremes of peril and of pain. To ſcatter with their little band, the encircling millions of *barbarians*, is the ſmalleſt of their achievements. They croſs rivers, they ſcale rocks, whoſe ſlippery banks, and craggy ſummits, are lined with oppoſing nations. They wade through deſerts of ſnow; and paſs over inhoſpitable mountains, the far more dreaded abodes of *deſolation drought*, and *famine*. They encounter the keenneſs of the northern ſtorm, and all the rigour of the moſt malignant ſeaſons.—As ſome of theſe articles are incapable of being expreſſed by the pencil, the artiſt remits us to the hiſtorian; and has contented himſelf with marking out the moſt diſtinguiſhed ſtages of this memorable expedition. Only we view the courageous itinerants, once again, on a pretty lofty eminence. There they appear, not with their former dejection, but in all the tranſports of joy.

Eug. This, Sir, is the mountain *Tecqua*. From whence they had the firſt view of the ſea, and the firſt dawn of ſafety. There they embrace one another, and extol their commanders, eſpecially the noble *Xenophon;* whoſe hiſtory gives me great delight, and his manly yet benign aſpect, ſtrangely attracts my eſteem. Methinks, under ſuch a general, I could have been willing

willing to take my ſhare in all the toil, and all the hazards of the expedition.

Aſp. Would my *Eugenio?* Then I will liſt him under a Captain unſpeakably more accompliſhed and beneficent. Young as you are, you ſhall, from this hour, commence a ſoldier and a traveller. A *ſoldier*, to fight againſt ſin, and every temptation. A *traveller*, to paſs through the wilderneſs of this world, unto the land of everlaſting reſt.—Though your enemies may be numerous, and your journey tedious, yet faint not, neither be diſcouraged. The LORD of heaven is your guide, and heaven itſelf ſhall be your exceeding great reward. When you arrive at thoſe happy abodes, your delight will infinitely ſurpaſs all that the *Grecians* felt on *Tecqua*, when their raviſhed eyes beheld, and their tongues with ecſtaſy ſhouted, *The ſea! the ſea!*

The ſcene of yonder picture, I would venture to affirm, lies among the ancient *Jews*.

Eug. How can you tell this, Sir, at ſuch a diſtance?

Aſp. By *the fringes in the borders of their garments, and on each fringe a ribband of blue.*—GOD almighty commanded all the *Jews*, to obſerve this peculiarity in their habit *; that, their very cloaths, being different from the apparel of their *Heathen* neighbours, might admoniſh

* One would wonder, how the *Jews* can ſo *tenaciouſly* adhere to their law, and yet ſo *apparently* neglect its precepts. Where are the ſons of *Abraham*, who obſerve this expreſs and poſitive command of JEHOVAH? Though this indeed *might* be obeyed, yet many of the *Moſaical* injunctions are rendered, and by nothing leſs than the diſpenſations of providence, abſolutely impracticable. Is not this therefore a moſt inconteſtable proof,—a proof, not invented by the arts of ſophiſtry, but written by the finger of the ALMIGHTY himſelf,—that the *legal* ordinances are aboliſhed, in order to make way for a *better* diſpenſation? When the avenues are become inacceſſible, the houſe untenantable, and the principal apartments *irreparably* decayed; is not this the moſt cogent admonition to the inhabitants, that they betake themſelves to ſome new and more commodious reſidence?—See *Numb.* xv. 38.

admoniſh them not to be conformed to their idolatrous worſhip and licentious manners.—This, as well as every other divine command, our *LORD JESUS CHRIST* moſt exactly obeyed. Therefore we are told by the evangelical hiſtorian, that the diſeaſed woman, *who touched but the hem of his garment, was reſtored to health. Hem* it is in our *Engliſh* Bibles. But, if you conſult that moſt excellent of all books, the *Greek* Teſtament, you will find, that the original word might more properly be rendered *fringe* *.—However, let us paſs from the drapery to the deſign.

Eug. Here we ſee *David* in one of the moſt threatening exigencies of his whole life. *Saul*, more like a blood-hound than a king, purſues the beſt of ſons, and the moſt valuable of ſubjects. He has extended the wings of his very ſuperior army, in order to ſurround † the injured hero, and his handful of aſſociates.

Aſp.

* Matth. ix. 20. Κρασπέδου.

† To this, or ſome ſuch incident, may be applied a paſſage of the *Pſalms*, which, in our tranſlation, is very obſcure; has ſcarce any ſenſe, or, if any, a very unjuſtifiable one. *Wherefore ſhould I fear in the days of evil, when the wickedneſs of my heels compaſſeth me round about?* Pſal. xlix. 5.—*Wherefore?* The reaſon is very *apparent*. When wickedneſs cleaves to a perſon's heels, or habitually attends his goings, it raiſes an army of terrors. It unſheaths the ſword of divine vengeance, and levels at his guilty head every threatening in the book of GOD.

Surely then another tranſlation ſhould be given to the words, and a different turn to the ſenſe! And another tranſlation the words will bear; a different ſenſe the connection demands. *Wherefore ſhould I fear, when wickedneſs compaſſeth me about at my heels?* This is a fine ſpirited interrogation. This implies a great and edifying truth. From this alſo the verſe appears, not only with propriety, but with beauty.—*When wickedneſs*, or the malicious attempts of wicked men—*compaſs me about*, ſurround me, threaten me on every ſide,—nay, when they *are at my* very *heels*, juſt upon the point to ſeize, overwhelm, and cruſh me; ſo that the danger ſeems both inevitable and imminent:—yet even then, having GOD's almighty power and inviolable faithfulneſs for my protection, *wherefore ſhould I be alarmed?*

Asp. This is the moſt *animated*, and, I think, the moſt *maſterly* performance, that has hitherto come under our notice.—Conſternation and doubt agitate their looks. Shall they ſurrender themſelves, as ſo many tame victims, to a tyrant's fury; or ſhall they cut their way to ſafety, through the hearts of countrymen, friends, and brothers? Dreadful dilemma!—While they are debating, the purſuers are cloſing upon them. A few, a few minutes more, muſt decide their fate. —But who is the perſon that intervenes, juſt at this *critical* juncture?

Eug. It is a meſſenger from the principal inhabitants of *Judea*: He comes breathleſs and trembling, amazement in his face, and duſt upon his head. "An in-"vaſion!" he cries,—"An invaſion! The *Philiſtines* "have poured themſelves upon our frontiers!—The "*Philiſtines* are over-running the land *!"

Asp. Upon the receipt of this news, ſee! what vexation reddens in the diſappointed monarch's aſpect! What anger lightens in his eye! At the ſame time, what pale reflections on his country's danger, mingle themſelves with the fiery paſſions, and almoſt quench the flame enkindling in his cheeks. Shall the vulture relinquiſh his prey, even when it lies fluttering under his talons? Galling thought! But his kingdom is at ſtake. If he does not immediately advance to repel the enemy, his all, his all is loſt. Burning therefore with indignation, yet chilled with fear, he turns, haſty though reluctant, away †.—Are you not charmed, *Eugenio*, with this deſcription of *tumultuous* and *contrary*

alarmed! Alarmed! No; confiding in ſuch a ſafeguard, I will bid defiance to my enemies, and bid adieu to my fears.

* This event is related, 1 *Sam.* xxiii. 25. *&c.* And it is one of the moſt extraordinary inſtances of a divine interpoſal, at the very criſis of need, that any hiſtory has recorded.

† ——————— Εχει ασχονλιη θυμω.

Thus *Homer* expreſſes the contrariety of paſſions, that frequently operate, at the ſame time, in the ſame breaſt.

trary passions, which afford the finest subject for historic painting, and are so happily expressed in this piece?

Eug. Indeed, Sir, I am *shocked*, rather than charmed. The very looks of that revengeful monarch fill me with horror. What must he suffer in his mind, who discovers such rage and anguish in his features! I would not have his furious temper for all his royal power.

Asp. Then, my dear *Eugenio*, you must endeavour to suppress every emotion of envy and malevolence. You must cherish a cordial good-will to all men; and learn to rejoice in *their* excellencies and happiness, as well as in *your own*. Envy is the worm that gnaws, envy is the fury that embroils, his wretched heart. And an author, with whom you will ere long be acquainted, has assured us,

Invidia Siculi non invenere tyranni
Tormentum majus. HOR.

The next is a kind of *night-piece*. Stars are in the sky, and the new moon rides on the skirts of the hemisphere; which affords just light enough to distinguish objects.—This is a perfect contrast to the foregoing. We see no conflict of jarring passions. But the principal person appears *sedate* and *composed*, as the night that surrounds him. He stands on the bank of a river, thoughtful and attentive; as tho' he was pondering, or executing, some important project.

Eug. This is *Cyrus the Great*. He stands upon the banks of the *Euphrates;* not far from *Babylon*. He points with his sceptre, and is giving directions to his army. The directions are, to pass thro' the channel of the river, (which is drained of its water,) in order to surprise the city.

Asp. This is a prince of very superior dignity; the honoured instrument of executing JEHOVAH's counsels. He was foretold by the prophet *Isaiah*, and even mentioned by name *, more than two hundred

* Is. xliv. 28. xlv. 1.

hundred years before his birth. Let us wish him prosperity. For he goes to humble the pride of *Babylon*, and release the captivity of *Israel*.—See! with what regular movements, and what calm alacrity, his troops advance. Silence seems to escort them; while, under covert of the shades, and with providence at their head, they march along a road, never before trodden by the foot of man.—The soldiers of the garrison have abandoned their station on the wall, to join in the dissolute indulgence of this fatal night. The inhabitants, like many a heedless sinner, are lulled in indolence, and dreaming of pleasures, even on the very brink of ruin.

Eug. Why are those *brazen gates* which lead to the river, placed in such a distinguished point of view? They strike my eye more, I think, than all the monuments of art and grandeur, which adorn that superb city.—And let me farther ask, whether the painter has not offended against probability, in suffering them to stand wide open? On the approach of so formidable an adversary, I should expect to have found them shut with all possible security.

Asp. In this particular, the painter has shewed his judgment, and not forgotten his piety. GOD had devoted that haughty and oppressive metropolis to destruction. And you will perceive, from this circumstance, how wonderfully he *over-rules* all events, for the accomplishment of his sacred purpose. Had those ponderous gates been shut *, the city had continued impreg-

* See this very momentous, tho' seemingly inconsiderable circumstance, finely illustrated by Mr *Rollin*, and compared with a remarkable prophecy in *Isaiah*. *Ancient Hist.* vol. II. p. 144. 153.—A work, in which the most *entertaining* and *instructive* events of antiquity are regularly digested, elegantly related, and stripped of those minuter incidents, which make the story move slow, and are apt to fatigue the attention.—Concise, but judicious observations are interspersed; which may teach young minds, to a form a right judgment of things,

impregnable, and the whole enterprise been defeated. But, through some accidental forgetfulness, occasioned by the disorders of this riotous solemnity, or rather by a very *signal interposition* of divine vengeance, they are left open, and afford an easy entrance to slaughter and death; which rush upon the unhappy creatures, all sunk in sleep, or overcharged with wine, as a concealed snare, in some dreadful unexpected moment springs up, and inextricably entangles the unwary bird.—Was I to inscribe this picture with a motto, I would chuse the apostle's admonition, BE SOBER: BE VIGILANT.

Who is this, with his length of hair * flowing upon

and not be misled, by the *plausibility* of popular notions, or the *partiality* of prejudised historians.—Many very distinguished predictions of scripture, are explained and confirmed by correspondent facts, from the most authentic memoirs of classical literature. Indeed, a perpetual regard to the elucidation and honour of the *sacred oracles*, runs through and ennobles the whole performance.—Which method, if not strictly conformable to the rules of historical composition, is a transgression of them greatly to their advantage. It may be said to resemble the *golden branch*, celebrated by *Virgil*, and plucked by his hero: whose growth, though a departure from the usual laws of vegetation, was far from depreciating the value of the tree.

Though I admire the whole, I am charmed with the *conclusion*. It is, I think, peculiarly pertinent, and inimitably grand; has a dignity, an elevation, a majesty, which, somewhat like the kingdom it describes, is quite unequalled, and little less than stupendous;

Πανλοθεν αρσυρεος, χρυσειην δ' εκτοθεν κορυνην.

* I believe it was not customary with the *Romans*, especially their warriors, to have long flowing hair. This therefore might seem an offence against what the *Italians* call *il costume*, if the painter was not supported by the authority of *Livy*; who, in his descriptive picture of *Scipio*, gives us the following touches: *Species corporis ampla ac magnifica. Præterquam quod suapte natura multa majestas inerat, adornabat* promissa cæsaries, *habitusque corporis, non cultus munditiis, sed virilis vere ac militaris.* Lib. XXVIII. c. 35.

on his ſhoulders; with ſuch amplitude of perſonage, ſuch magnificence of mien, and noble plainneſs of habit?

Eug. This is my favourite piece.—My father ſometimes ſhews me the heads of the philoſophers: but there is ſomething ſo uninviting and ſevere in *Socrates* and *Diogenes*, that I could never much admire them. —But this, Sir, is *Scipio*; the thunderbolt of war, as *Virgil* calls him. Here is ſomething ſo lovely and engaging, as well as grand and majeſtic, that I am never weary of looking on him.

Aſp. He appears with a lady of diſtinguiſhed beauty in his hand.

Eug. This is the captive princeſs, who had been taken in war, who was ſet apart for the general's prize, but whom he is now reſtoring to her eſpouſed huſband.

Aſp. You are right, *Eugenio*.—He has juſt led in his lovely captive, attended by her huſband and parents, amidſt a full aſſembly of *Romans* and *Celtiberians*, the victors and the vanquiſhed. His modeſt eyes, you obſerve, are rather turned from, than gazing upon, the blooming virgin —Cannot you ſuppoſe, how the ſpectators muſt be affected, upon the opening of this extraordinary ſcene? Every one beholds the hero with admiration, the lady with delight. Every boſom is big with expectation, or in pain for the event. After a ſhort pauſe, he addreſſes himſelf to the lover, in words to this effect:—"I am no ſtranger to your in-"tereſt in this fine woman. The fortune of war has "put her entirely into my power. The circumſtan-"ces of my youth cannot render me inſenſible to ſo "engaging a perſon. But with us *Romans*, honour "and generoſity have a more prevailing influence "than tranſitory gratifications. Take your bride; be "happy in each other; and when you look upon "this gift, admire the *Romans*, be a friend to *Rome*." —Upon this he delivers her (as you behold the action here repreſented) to the enamoured prince.

See! how the crouds, that cluſter and hang around, are ſtruck with the beneficent deed!—In the *Celtiberians*, we behold a mixture of veneration and ſurpriſe. Their looks are full of meaning. Methinks they are going to cry out, *Excellent man!*—In the *Romans*, we diſcern a conſcious ſuperiority, and exultation of mind. Triumph is in their features; as though they would ſay, *This wondrous man is ours!*—In the lady we admire the accompliſhed and modeſt fair, uniting all the dignity of her birth with all the delicacy of her ſex. What ſoft confuſion and what tender joy appear in her countenance! She is loſt in wonder, and at a loſs for words; ſhe ſpeaks the acknowledgments of her heart, by the ſilent eloquence of a tear; which ſteals down her glowing cheek, to bedew the kind hand, that has protected her innocence, and is delivering her to her lord.—*Her lord* is under an apparent and a graceful ſtruggle of love and gratitude. He dotes upon his charming princeſs, and he almoſt adores his generous benefactor. We can hardly tell, whether he is going to claſp the former in his arms, or throw himſelf at the feet of the latter. The *aged parents* expreſs their tranſport in a different manner. Their knees are bent to the earth; their eyes are lifted up to heaven; they implore, for their noble guardian, every bleſſing that the gods can beſtow.—*Scipio* himſelf diſplays all the magnanimity of the conqueror, tempered with the ſedateneſs of the philoſopher, and ſoftened with the gentleneſs of the friend. He gives happineſs, but he enjoys a greater. His eyes ſparkle with a ſublime delight; and he ſeems to anticipate the applauſe, which this truly-heroic act will gain, in all countries and in all ages.

Eug. Is not this a greater victory than any that he had won in the field of battle? and a nobler triumph than any that could be voted him by the applauding ſenate? Amiable *Scipio!* Might I be a *Roman*, I would be no other than *Scipio*.

Aſp. I wiſh you, my dear Sir, the temperance and generoſity of *Scipio;* but from a better motive than his. *He*, I fear, was too much ſwayed by a ſpirit of ambition, which *you* muſt endeavour to ſuppreſs, rather than cheriſh.—A *ſpirit* of *ambition*, which pants after diſtinction, and thirſts for applauſe, is diametrically oppoſite to the genius of the goſpel *.—It is a leſſon which muſt infallibly be unlearned, if ever we become poſſeſſors of faith, or partakers of *CHRIST* †.—It is a root of bitterneſs, which naturally produces envy ‡; that moſt odious, and (as you have juſt now ſeen) moſt ſelf-tormenting of all tempers.—It is a habit of mind, which generally renders men incendiaries in the church, and diſturbers of its tranquillity ‖.—It is therefore more like an *inchanted potion* which inebriates, than a *genuine cordial* which animates.

Eug. From what motive then would you encourage me, to be diligent in the purſuit of learning, and in the cultivation of every virtue?

Aſp. Not, that you may acquire the poor, contemptible, periſhing honour, which cometh from men;—but that you may *pleaſe* GOD, your almighty CREATOR;—that you may *glorify CHRIST*, your infinitely-condeſcending REDEEMER;—that you may yourſelf attain what is the true *dignity* and only *felicity* of your nature; and may be ſerviceable to the *beſt intereſts* of your fellow-creatures,—even their preſent holineſs, and their eternal happineſs.

Theſe are the *grand* and *endearing* encouragements which our holy religion propoſes. Theſe will operate, I am bold to aver, with a much ſweeter and a far more ſovereign efficacy, than all the glittering enticements which ambition can deviſe. And, what is above all other conſiderations weighty, theſe will be more likely, or rather theſe will be very certain, to receive the *divine bleſſing*.

You

* Gal. v. 26. † John v. 44. ‡ Gal. v. 26. ‖ 3 John 9, 10.

You told me you was never weary of contemplating *Scipio*. For which reaſon, I promiſe myſelf, you will not be fatigued or diſpleaſed, though I have ſo long confined your attention to this portrait.—But have we no hero of *Britain*, fit to join this illuſtrious triumvirate from *Rome*, *Perſia*, and *Judea*?

Eug. The very next we meet, is one of our *Engliſh* kings. But I cannot ſay, that I remember either his name, or his ſtory.

Aſp. How, my young gentleman! Do you read the annals of *other* nations, and not acquaint yourſelf with the affairs of *your own* country?—If I was in your place, I would apply myſelf to the claſſical writers by way of ſtudy, and to ſome valuable *Engliſh* hiſtorian by way of amuſement. Such an amuſement is infinitely preferable to *novels* or *romances*; and will not only relax your attention, but enrich your mind.

Eug. I thank you, good Sir, for your admonition. And, if you pleaſe, I will now begin the ſtudy you recommend. Your explanation of theſe drawings ſhall be the rudiments of my knowledge; and I ſhall think it a happineſs, to receive my firſt inſtructions from ſo able a maſter.

Aſp. It is honour enough for *me*, *Eugenio*, to have given you the hint. I only point out your game, or ſpring the covey; you ſhall be taught by a more expert proficient, to make it your own. Yet, tho' others may direct you with greater ſkill, none will rejoice in your ſucceſsful purſuit, more ſincerely than myſelf.

This is our renowned *Henry the Fifth*, as he appeared after the victory of *Agincourt*. You ſee the gallant conqueror clad in ſteel, and recent from the ſlaughter of the inſulting foe. He ſeems to breathe an heroic ardour, which is irradiated and exalted by a lively devotion. If *courage* can be expreſſed by the pencil, that is its genuine likeneſs; keen, yet compoſed; graſping the ſword, yet looking up to heaven.—He

that,

that, a little while ago, drove the battle, like a whirlwind, on the legions of *France*, now bends a suppliant knee, and offers the eucharistic hymn, to the LORD GOD of hosts. No turbulent or disorderly joy riots among the soldiery. They express not the triumph of their hearts, in frantic exultations, or drunken revels, but in acts of thanksgiving to JEHOVAH; in an attitude, which speaks the devout acknowledgement of the prophet, *Thou art our battle-axe and weapons of war* *; or the grateful declaration of the Psalmist, *Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto* THY *name be the glory* †.

This last instance informs my *Eugenio*, that *prayer* is an honourable employ,—has been practised by persons of the most admired endowments,—is the surest method of *obtaining success*, in whatever business we undertake; and of *enjoying prosperity*, in whatever circumstances we are placed.

The next piece is different from all the preceding. In *those*, armies with their banners displayed, ships of war riding at anchor, battering engines and instruments of death, form the perspective. In *this*, we have, all around, a lovely and rural landscape; expressive of peace, and enriched with plenty. Corn and cattle in the valleys; fruitful vineyards on the hills; and beautiful gardens surrounding the houses. —But who is that *graceful* and *august* personage, seated on a stately throne of ivory and gold?

Eug. This is *Solomon*, having an interview with the Queen of *Sheba*. A large train of her attendants throng the avenues of the palace: some leading foreign animals; some bearing vases and caskets; all arrayed in strange apparel. The *Israelites* stare upon their outlandish visitants, their costly presents, and peculiar habits. Their visitants are as much surprised at the walls, the towers, and especially the temple of *Jerusalem*.

* Jer. li. 20.
† Psal. cxv. 1.

Jeruſalem. But you, Sir, I apprehend, are moſt pleaſed with the venerable perſon who fills the throne.

Aſp. Indeed I am; and ſo is his royal gueſt. You obſerve, in her robe, her retinue, her deportment, an unpoliſhed kind of grandeur. But all in *Solomon* is ſo ſplendid, and at the ſame time ſo elegant; diſplays ſuch a delicacy of taſte, and ſuch a magnificence of ſpirit, that the *Sabæan* princeſs is perfectly in raptures. See! how ſhe ſtands fixed and gazing with ſpeechleſs admiration *; like one loſt in aſtoniſhment, and tranſported with delight! Her looks ſpeak, what, when ſhe recovers the power of utterance, her tongue expreſſes; *It was a true report, that I heard in my own land, of thy acts, and of thy wiſdom. Howbeit, I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had ſeen: and behold! the half was not told me: thy wiſdom and proſperity exceed the fame which I heard.*

Eug. This is a great compliment. Is it right, Sir, to praiſe a man, in ſuch plain terms and ſuch high ſtrains, to his very face? I think, I have heard *Philenor* blame ſuch a practice, as inconſiſtent with refined manners; and I have heard my father ſay, No one is a better judge of fine breeding than *Philenor*. And if the moſt agreeable behaviour, added to the moſt winning converſation, are what you call *fine breeding*, I am ſure, *Philenor* is maſter of it to a very great degree. I love to be in his company, and am never better pleaſed, than to hear him talk.

Aſp. The compliment is high, but it is juſt. It is ſtrictly conformable to truth, and proceeds from the moſt unaffected *ſincerity*. If we take what follows into conſideration, we ſhall have a pattern of true politeneſs; a propriety and a refinement of addreſs, far ſurpaſſing her Majeſty's external ſtate.—*Happy are thy men; happy are theſe thy ſervants; which ſtand continually*

* This, I apprehend, is the meaning of that remarkably-ſtrong expreſſion, uſed by the ſacred hiſtorian; *There was no more ſpirit in her*, 1 Kings x. 5.

ally before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Instead of envying, she congratulates the domestics of *Solomon*, and rejoices in their superior felicity. This is *benevolence.—Blessed be the LORD thy GOD, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel. Because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.* Here she ascribes all his royal virtues, and matchless accomplishments to the bounty of heaven. Though they are applauded in the person of *Solomon*, they are recognized as the free gift of GOD. This is *piety.*—When the endowments we celebrate, lead us to magnify, not their possessor, but their author; then the poison is corrected, and turned into medicine. Praise thus circumstanced, loses its malignity, and is rendered salubrious.

It pleases me to perceive, that you take so much notice of the conversation, which passes between your worthy father, and his ingenious friends. I promise myself, you will also remember the maxim, which we have now learned from a queen: A queen, whom not only the sacred historian, but our *LORD JESUS CHRIST* himself vouchsafes to mention, and with marks of approbation. Whose name therefore will be had in honour, when *Semiramis* and *Cleopatra*, the heroines, and the beauties, are consigned over to oblivion. The maxim which I mean, is this:—There must be an union of sincerity, of benevolence, and of piety, in order to constitute *true politeness*. Whoever pretends to fine breeding, and is destitute of these qualities, is nothing more than a pretender. He bears just the same proportion to this ornamental character, as the ape and the monkey bear to the man.

But we have not sufficiently examined our picture. The dome is of cedar; supported by pillars of marble; to which are annexed curtains of silk and embroidery. —The pillars shine with the most glossy polish, and swell upon the eye with the boldest projections. The

curtains, pendent in large and easy folds, seem not adhesive to the canvas, but waving in the air.—The throne is exquisitely contrived, richly ornamented, and highly finished. It is evident, the painter had in his eye that remarkable observation of scripture, *There was not the like made in any kingdom;* and he has really done all which art could devise, or colours execute, in order to exemplify the great encomium.

If the monarch was absent, we should desire no better entertainment, than to view the beauties of the apartment; but can hardly allow any attention to the edifice, when so graceful and so grand a presence bespeaks our regard. For I must own, there appears to me something peculiarly excellent in this figure; a *serenity* and *dignity*, without any of that martial air, which adds a tincture of ferocity to the warrior; a *sagacity* and *penetration*, not to be equalled by the wrinkles of age, yet transparent thro' all the bloom of youth. Piety and wisdom, the love of GOD and the grace of his SPIRIT, gave an elevation to the mind, a secret charm to the countenance, and something more than mortal to the whole man.—I am apt to suspect, *Eugenio*, that you yourself are ready to adopt a new favourite; that you now prefer *Solomon* even to *Scipio;* and had rather be like the beloved "of the LORD," than the darling of *Rome*.

Eug. Every thing in *Solomon* is so venerable and heavenly, that I am filled with awe, rather than fired with emulation. It is not for a boy to think of imitating such high perfection!

Asp. Why not, my dear Sir? It was GOD who gave *Solomon* his superior wisdom, and exalted accomplishments. And GOD is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;* as willing to hear, and as able to help *you*, as he was to hear and bless his servant *Solomon*.—Neither let your youth be a discouragement. *Out of the mouth of very babes and sucklings, HE ordaineth strength*,

strength, and perfects praise *. Samuel ministered in the temple, when he was but a child †. *Josiah*, while he was yet young, began to seek after the GOD of his fathers ‡. *Timothy* was acquainted with the holy scriptures from his earliest years ‖. And *Solomon* himself was none of the oldest, when he was favoured with that extraordinary vision, and made that admirable choice at *Gibeon* †: A passage of scripture which, I dare say, you have read; which I would recommend to your attentive consideration; and which, I hope, you will take for the model of your conduct.—And if you, like that illustrious young prince, desire a wise and understanding heart, more than the affluence of wealth, or the distinctions of honour; if you *seek wisdom as silver, and search for her as for hid treasure; then shall* you *also understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of GOD* ††.

The next that occurs, presents us with a view of the *sea*; and a most tremendous view it is.

Eug. This is the voyage related by the evangelist, when our LORD sailed with his disciples, and bid the storm be still, and made the ocean calm.

Asp. Then we may truly say, *A greater than Solomon is here!*—Give me leave to hint, upon this occasion, that every picture of *CHRIST* must necessarily *depretiate* his glorious person. Therefore you will never think, that a few rays beaming round his sacred head, can properly distinguish the SON of GOD, or express the grace of his offices, and the divinity of his nature. It is not to display the perfections of the *LORD JESUS himself*, but only to give us an idea of one of his *works*, that the pencil has been employed on this grand subject.

You will also remember, that it was not the main ocean, but the lake of *Tiberias*, on which they sailed. However,

* Psal. viii. 2. † 1 Sam. ii. 18. ‡ 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3.
‖ 2 Tim. iii. 15. † 1 Kings iii. 5, 6. &c. †† Prov. ii. 4, 5.

However, the painter is at liberty to make his sea as large as he pleases, and his *storm* as terrible as he can. Accordingly he has collected all the horrors of a tempest.—Lightenings fire the arch above; and thunders, could thunders have been painted, would have rocked the ground below. Those flaming bolts have smitten a huge promontory, and tore its rugged brow. See! how the rocky fragment is tumbling, with impetuous bound, from cliff to cliff.—The waters, lashed by furious winds, heave and toss their tumultuous billows. Here they rise in rolling ridges; there they rage in devouring whirls.—Amidst these horrible commotions, you behold a *vessel* in all the extremity of *distress*. Straining under the blast, battered and half-overwhelmed by the surge, she can no longer maintain the unequal conflict; she yields to the resistless flood; and begins, evidently begins to sink.—Perplexed, amazed, and at their wits end, the disciples run to and fro. They shift the tackling; lighten the stowage; try every expedient; and find, to their inexpressible affliction, every expedient ineffectual.

We cast our eye forward, and their divine MASTER appears, sedately rising from a gentle slumber. He sees the perplexity and horror of his companions, without the least emotion of alarm. He sees destruction approaching, heaven and earth mingling, and, instead of being dismayed, *enjoys* the elemental war.—What composure in his mien! what dignity in his attitude! what majesty, sweetened with compassion, in his aspect! such as could arise from no other cause, but a conscious and undoubted certainty, that not one of the company should perish; not a hair of their head be injured; and that all this mighty uproar of nature should end in a demonstration of his *mightier* power, and a confirmation of his disciples *faith*.—He looks abroad into the mutinous sky, and the turbulent deep. He waves, with an authoritative air, his sacred hand; and adds the great commanding word, PEACE:

BE STILL.—Do you inquire after the effect? Let *Milton* declare it;

Confuſion heard his voice, and wild uproar
Stood rul'd.

This is expreſſed in another draught; where all is huſhed; the tremendous agitations ceaſe, and the moſt profound tranquillity takes place. The water is ſmooth as glaſs; we have the picture of a perfect *calm;* and view thoſe very perſons, who, a little while ago, were in the wildeſt diſtraction, and in the jaws of ruin, ſurrounding their LORD as men alive from the dead *. Their conſternation is turned into wonder, and

* The circumſtances of this miracle, as related by the evangeliſts, are truly wonderful, and to the laſt degree pictureſque. *Maſter! Maſter! we periſh!* How conciſe, how abrupt, and how ardent is this exclamation! Therefore how ſtrongly ſignificant of imminent danger, and of the utmoſt diſtreſs! They have not time to be explicit. A moment's delay may be fatal. What they utter is conciſeneſs itſelf, and all rapidity, *Luke* viii. 24.—This is nature; this is the *genuine* language of the heart; this is true hiſtoric painting. Every impartial reader muſt admire this exquiſitely juſt and fine ſtroke, far beyond the diffuſe and (I had almoſt ſaid *impertinently*) florid ſpeech, which *Virgil* puts into the mouth of his hero on a like occaſion. *Æn.* I. 98.

Σιωπα, πεφιμωσο. What a majeſty in this command! 'Tis admirable; 'tis inimitable; 'tis worthy of GOD.—I think, we may obſerve a peculiarly-proper word, addreſſed and adapted to each element, the firſt enjoining a *ceſſation* of the *winds*, the ſecond a *quieſcence* of the *waves;* ſilence in all that roared, compoſure in all that raged. As tho' (to give a ſhort paraphraſe on the grand injunction) it had been ſaid, Winds, *be huſh'd;* Waves, *be calm.* Mark iv. 39.

The *effect* on the diſciples is deſcribed, with all the force of imagination, and all the energy of diction. To repreſent in colours, what the evangelical hiſtorian has left upon record, would be a ſubject fit for the immortal *Raphael;* and perhaps not to be equalled even by his maſterly pencil. Λιαν εκ περισσου τω εαυτοις εξισταντο και εθαυμαζον—εθαυμαζον, *they were amazed*—εξισαντο, *they were tranſported with amazement*—λιαν, *to the very greateſt degree*—εκ περισσου, *exceeding all* that language can expreſs. *Mark* vi. 51.

and their pangs of fear into ecstasies of joy. They acknowledge the omnipotence, and adore the goodness of *JESUS*.

Eug. Well may they acknowledge his *omnipotence;* since *winds and waves obey him.* Great reason have they to adore his *goodness*, since he rescued them from the very jaws of death; that worst of deaths, perishing in the stormy deep.

Asp. If *JESUS CHRIST* had vouchsafed such a deliverance to my *Eugenio;* what would he have thought, or how would he have been affected?

Eug. I should have thought myself *inexpressibly* obliged; and that I could never shew *sufficient* gratitude to so great a Benefactor.

Asp. Assure yourself then, my dear Sir, that he has done infinitely more for you:—That he has delivered you, not indeed from being swallowed up by the raging billows, but from sinking into the pit of everlasting perdition:—That he has not only rescued you from endless destruction, but obtained eternal life and heavenly happiness for you.—This he has done, not by speaking a word, or issuing a command; but by bearing your guilt, suffering your punishment, and dying the death, the most ignominious and tormenting death, in your stead.—Should you not then *unfeignedly* love HIM? *study* to please HIM? and make it the *reigning* endeavour of your life to glorify HIM?

Here *Theron* returned, and the young student withdrew, after receiving some affectionate and encouraging compliments from *Aspasio;* who was going to enlarge upon the excellent taste of his friend, the instructive style of his pictures, the good sense and great proficiency of his son. But *Theron*, far from coveting the praise, and fully satisfied with the consciousness, of acting the becoming part, prevented his discourse, by stepping to a pair of glass folding-doors, which, thrown open, admitted them into the *study*.

A chimney-piece of grey marble, with plain, but bold and protuberant mouldings, formed a very handsome appearance. In various little niches, were fixed elegant *busts;* and on the several interstices, hung beautiful *prints;* representing many of the most eminently-learned men, who were the ornaments and blessings, both of ancient and modern times. The shelves, all around, were accommodated, not encumbered, with books. *Aspasio*, running over the lettered backs, observed a collection of the most valuable authors, in history and natural philosophy, in poetry and divinity.

You will easily perceive, said *Theron*, that I am somewhat singular in furnishing my study, as well as in ornamenting the avenue. My books are not for shew, but use; and claim a regard, rather on account of their worth, than their number.—An immense multitude of volumes, I have always thought, is more likely to embarrass the attention, than to improve the understanding. A *huge* library seems to resemble a perplexing *labyrinth;* and often bewilders the mind instead of leading it expeditiously to the acquisition of truth.

When people are eager to peruse a multiplicity of writings, it frequently happens, that in reading all, they digest none *. They taste some empty and transient amusement, but collect no solid or lasting advantage. Their minds are somewhat like those capacious looking-glasses, which we have seen exposed in the most frequented and populous streets of *London*. They

* The author of *Night-Thoughts* has touched this subject, with great judgment, and equal sprightliness.

Voracius learning, often over-fed,
Digests not into sense the motley meal.
This forager on other's wisdom, leaves
Her native farm, her reason quite untill'd.
With mix'd manure she surfeits the rank soil,
Dung'd, but not dress'd; and rich to beggary.

They receive all manner of ſhadowy images, but no ſubſtantial impreſſion. A thouſand figures *paſs through* them, not one *abides* in them.

Our books, replied *Aſpaſio*, as well as our friends, ſhould rather be *ſelect*, than *numerous*. For my part, I would deſire no more than two or three of the moſt correct and maſterly writers in any ſcience. Theſe a perſon of moderate capacity may be able to comprehend; and not comprehend only, but enrich his memory with the choiceſt ſentiments, and make the ſubſtance of their works his own.—He will, by repetition and familiar converſe, enter into their *ſpirit*, and acquire their *manner*. While a rambler in reading does little more than gratify his fancy, without refining his taſte, or amending his heart.

Upon this *Aſpaſio* turned himſelf; and eſpied, in one corner of the apartment, the celeſtial and terreſtrial *globes*; in another a large reflecting *teleſcope*; and on the top of a bureau, one or two of the beſt *microſcopes*.

Theſe inſtruments, reſumed *Theron*, have opened an inexhauſtible fund of the fineſt entertainments *.

They

* Gentlemen of taſte and ſeriouſneſs cannot, I think, have a nobler piece of furniture for their ſtudies, than the *microſcope* and the *teleſcope*, the *orrery* and the *air-pump*. This apparatus would afford them a moſt delightful and improving amuſement in a ſolitary hour.—It would alſo give them an opportunity of entertaining their company in a truly-elegant and very inſtructive manner. It would open a fine and ample field, for diſplaying the glories of GOD the CREATOR, and of GOD the REDEEMER.—As the diſcoveries made by theſe inſtruments, are ſo *ſurpriſing* in themſelves, and *new* to the generality of mankind, every edifying hint deduced from *ſuch* obſervations, would come with a peculiar recommendation.—This, I am ſure, would be a method of reducing to practice, what the polite hiſtorian has recorded of the politer *Scipio*; *Elegantiſſimo intervalla negotiorum otio diſpunxit.* VELL. PATERC.—And, I believe, it might be a happy means of turning the ſoul, to bear a part in that immortal hymn; *Worthy art thou, O LORD, to receive glory, and honour*

They have furniſhed us with *new eyes;* and brought up, I may venture to ſay, a *new world* into our view. They give us a ſight of wonders, which may ſeem incredible to the incurious vulgar, and were utterly unknown to the moſt inquiſitive ſages of antiquity. They charm the eye with a diſplay of inimitable beauties, where nothing worthy of notice was expected. They throw the mind into a pleaſing tranſport of admiration; and from the meaneſt, loweſt objects, raiſe the moſt *amiable* and *exalted* ideas of the all-glorious CREATOR.

I have often regretted, that ſuch rational and manly gratifications ſhould be almoſt univerſally ſupplanted by the *fantaſtical* and *childiſh* amuſements in vogue. Why ſhould not the contemplation of nature's ſurpriſing novelties, be as acceptable an entertainment, as the ſtale diverſion of *quadrille;* be as refined an employ for a leiſure-hour, as to count the ſpots on a pack of cards?—The ladies, I am very ſure, might find brighter colours, and more delicate ornaments, in the robes and head-dreſs of a common *fly*, than ever they found amidſt the trinkets of a *toy-ſhop*. And was the fair circle of females once acquainted with the radiant varniſh and rich ſtuds, which enamel the cover of a *beetle*'s wing, I am apt to think, they would view with leſs rapture, with more indifference, perhaps, with a becoming diſdain, all the pretty fancies of a *beau*'s wardrobe.

A few days ago, when the accompliſhed *Manilia* favoured us with a viſit, I ſhewed her, thro' a magnifying glaſs, the ſting of a bee, the ſcale of a ſoal, the wing of a gnat, and ſome other *beautiful minims* of nature, together with the powder which adheres to our finger, when we touch the body of a moth.—"Amazing!" cried the young lady. "What ele"gant figures! What inchanting finery!

——*Smalleſt*

nour, and power; for thou haſt created all things; and for thy pleaſure they now *exiſt, and were* at firſt *created*, Rev. iv. 11.

———*Smalleſt lineaments exact,*
In all the liveries deck'd of ſummer's pride,
With ſpots of gold and purple, azure and green *.

" How perfect the poliſh, and how high the finiſh-
" ing, of that little *weapon!*—This piece of *defenſive*
" armour, how ſkilfully contrived, and how curiouſ-
" ly wrought! Here riſing into little ridges, like the
" boſſes of a buckler, fitted to repel injuries. There
" ſcooped into little cavities, deſigned, I ſuppoſe, to
" diminiſh its weight; that the coat of mail may not
" encumber, even while it defends, the puny wearer.
" —What I took to be a whitiſh deſpicable rag, is the
" *neateſt fan* I ever beheld; mounted on ſticks † ini-
" mitably tapering and ſlender, tinged with all the
" ſoft and lovely colours of the moſt gloſſy mother of
" pearl.—But what aſtoniſhes me more than all, is
" the view of that coloured duſt, which your inſtru-
" ment has turned into a *cluſter* of *feathers*. Every
" one wrought off with a regularity and a delicacy,
" that are beyond the power of deſcription. The
" fineſt ſtroke drawn by the *Italian* pen, compared
" with the extreme minuteneſs of the ſhaft, is broad
" and bulky as an admiral's maſt. A ſpeck of leaf-
" gold, could it be weighed againſt the exquiſite at-
" tenuations of the vane ‡, would ſeem more ſub-
" ſtantial and ponderous than yonder marble ſlab.

" How nice, even to a prodigy, muſt be the me-
" chaniſm of the *animalcule* race! I ſee globules, I ſee
" tides of blood, rolling thro' mæanders inexpreſſi-
" bly finer than the fineſt hair.—Stranger ſtill! I ſee
" whole ſholes of active creatures expatiating in a
" ſingle drop of water ‖; taking their paſtime amidſt
" ſuch

* MILTON, book VII.

† Theſe *ſticks* are the little *ribs*, which ſupport, at proper intervals, the fine tranſparent membrane of the wing.

‡ *Vane* is the *feathery* part of a quill.

‖ In a ſingle drop of water, Dr *Hook* is ſaid to have diſco-
vered,

" ſuch a ſcanty canal, as unſtraitened and as much at " large, as *leviathan* in the abyſſes of the ocean.—A " whole kingdom of thoſe creatures, tho' collected into " a body, are quite undiſcernable by the naked eye. " What then muſt be the ſize of every *individual?* Yet in " every individual there is a complete ſyſtem of limbs; " each endowed with ſpontaneous motion; all aſſem- " bled, though not crouded, in a living *atom.*—To " reflect upon the texture of veſſels, and the opera- " tion of organs, ſo complex, ſo numerous, yet ſo in- " conceivably minute; how it awakens admiration! " fills me with reverence of the almighty MAKER! " and yields a pleaſure, infinitely ſuperior to all the " modiſh amuſements of our ſex!—Your diſcoveries " of *life in miniature*, have given me a diſguſt of what " is called *high life*, and its ſolemn fopperies. You " have ſpoiled me, *Theron*, for a faſhionable trifler. I " ſhall no longer reliſh the dull œconomy of the fan, " or the poor parade of the ſnuff-box."

Aſp. Have you nothing to ſay of the *teleſcope?*—I believe, it muſt be my province to celebrate this admirable invention; and I wiſh I could do it, with *Manilia*'s brilliant imagination.—If the *microſcope* leads us downward, to the curious ſecrets of the animalcule creation; the *teleſcope* bears us upward, to the grand peculiarities of the ſtarry regions. The eye, conduct-

ed

vered, with his *microſcope*, eight millions two hundred and eighty thouſand *animalcules.*—This is mentioned, becauſe it is the prevailing philoſophy of the age. Tho' I muſt confeſs, that Mr *Gautier* ſeems to have gone a conſiderable way towards giving it another turn. As he has proved, before a learned aſſembly at *Paris*, that the *vermiculares* of *Lewenhoeck*, and the living *moleculæ* of Mr *de Buffon*, were only balls of air agitated by the fermenting of the ſeed. If ſo, it is not impoſſible but Dr *Hook*'s *animalcula* may be nothing more than *balls* of air, agitated by the fermenting of the pepper.

Be this as it will, the young lady's remarks on the wonders of *mechaniſm* in the animalcule creation, I believe, will never be controverted.

ed by this wonderful guide, viſits a variety of majeſtic orbs, which would otherwiſe be loſt in unmeaſurable tracts of æther.—This, far more ſurpriſing than the diſcoveries of *Columbus*, has found out new colonies of worlds, in every quarter of the nocturnal ſkies. This has placed a glittering creſcent on the brow of one * of the planets; and has given others a moſt ſtately train of attendants †.

Tell me, *Theron*, Could you diſcern the full choir of the conſtellations, or diſtinguiſh the variegated face of the moon, without the aid of your *teleſcopic* tube? Could you, with your unaſſiſted eye, get a ſight of *Jupiter*'s ſatellites, or procure a glimpſe of *Saturn*'s ring?—Without that ſuplementary aid to our ſight, they are quite imperceptible; though the ſatellites of the former are incomparably more magnificent, than the *retinue* of all the monarchs in the world; and compared with the ring of the latter, all the *bridges* on ten thouſand rivers, are leſs than the ferule of your cane.

As the *teleſcope* to the eye, ſo is *revelation* to the underſtanding. It diſcovers truths, which, excluſive of ſuch a diſcovery, had been for ever hid from the moſt ſagacious minds.—'Tis ſtrange to the unlearned obſerver, that this ponderous globe of earth and ſeas ſhould wheel its rapid circuit round the ſun. But the *teleſcope* has rendered this fact clear to a demonſtration.—'Tis ſtrange likewiſe to our natural apprehenſions, that we ſhould die in *Adam*, and be undone by our firſt parent's diſobedience. Nor leſs ſo, that we ſhould be made alive in *CHRIST*, and derive our recovery from his *imputed* righteouſneſs. But revelation makes this doctrine as certain, as it is comfortable.

Ther. Does revelation make it certain?—This is a point not yet eſtabliſhed, but taken for granted. I rather apprehend, that revelation in no place maintains it,

* The planet *Venus*.

† The ſatellites of *Jupiter* and *Saturn*.

it, in many places disavows it.—Since your absence, *Aspasio*, I have spent some time in searching the scriptures, with a particular view to this tenet. And I can find no such expression in the whole Bible, as the imputation of *CHRIST*'s righteousness. If it was so *leading* an article, as you represent, surely it could not have been entirely forgotten by the inspired writers, nor utterly excluded from *their* body of divinity.

Asp. The very identical expression may not occur, and yet the doctrine be abundantly taught. I believe, you never met with the word *resurrection* in any part of the Pentateuch, nor ever read the phrase *satisfaction* in all the New Testament. Yet our LORD fully proved the truth of the former from the writings of *Moses;* and you yourself have acknowledged the latter to be the unanimous sense of the apostles and evangelists.

In the epistle to the *Romans*, we have express and repeated mention of a righteousness imputed. *What* or *whose* righteousness, can be the subject of this assertion?—Not the righteousness of *angels*. They are a superior class of beings, and have no such intimate connection with our nature.—Not the righteousness of eminent *saints*. This is the exploded error of Popery; and furnishes the *Romish* zealots with that chimera of arrogance and folly, works of supererogation.—Not any righteousness of our own: for it is positively declared to be *without works* *; in which no works of our own have any concurrence, or the least share.—What, other righteousness then can be meant, but the righteousness of our great SUBSTITUTE, SURETY, and SAVIOUR? who took our nature; discharged our debt; and is therefore styled, *JEHOVAH our righteousness* †.

Ther. This seems contrary to the whole tenor of the sacred instructions. What says the prophet? *When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right,*

* Rom. iv. 6. † Jer. xxiii. 6.

right, he shall save his soul alive *. Here that greatest of blessings, the salvation of the soul, is ascribed to a *departure from evil*, and a *perseverance in good*, to a real alteration in a man's *own* temper and conduct, not to any fanciful application of some transmissive righteousness from another.

Asp. Let me ask my *Theron*, Is there no wickedness, but riot and debauchery, profaneness and injustice? —*Unbelief*, though it may pass without censure or notice in a system of morality, is, in the volume of revelation, declared a *capital* crime. Our LORD, speaking of the HOLY SPIRIT, mentions it as a signal part of his office, that *he shall convince the world of sin*. —Of what sin? Scandalous violations of moral rectitude? This were a needless employ. The light of reason is sufficient to evince such a charge, and the court of conscience is erected to pass the deserved sentence. —Of sin, adds the heavenly TEACHER, *because they believe not on me* †; on my death, as the cause of their forgiveness; on my righteousness, as the ground of their acceptance; on my SPIRIT, as the powerful principle of their holiness.

Unbelief treats GOD as a liar ‡; because it rejects the testimony which he has bore concerning his beloved SON.—Unbelief tramples on the blood of *CHRIST*, and is a most contemptuous affront to all his saving offices.—Unbelief would counteract the operations of the HOLY GHOST; whose peculiar work it is, to testify of *CHRIST*, and make manifest his righteousness.—Unbelief instigates (could we have thought it possible?) a child of dust, a slave of sin, to idolize himself and his own performances.—To say all in a word, unbelief is that *great*, that *comprehensive* iniquity, which scornfully rejects, or impiously renounces, the most glorious method of salvation, which Omniscience itself could devise.

The

* Ezek. xviii. 27. † John xvi. 9. ‡ 1 John v. 10.

The wicked man, therefore, never turns from his wickedneſs, till he turns, by a true faith, to *JESUS CHRIST*. Till then, he is a rebel againſt the *goſpel*, however he may pay ſome ſpecious and partial regard to the law. So flagrant a rebel, that he ſtands particularly excepted, in the act of evangelical indemnity. For as *he that believeth on the SON, hath everlaſting life; ſo he that believeth not, is condemned already, and the wrath of GOD abideth on him* *.

Ther. What are the *Pſalmiſt*'s ſentiments on this ſubject? Does not he repreſent the matter in a very different light? *Thou, LORD, art merciful; for thou rewardeth every man according to his*, not another's *works* †.

Aſp. Weighty ſaying! May it impreſs our very hearts! —GOD is merciful, and *therefore* rewardeth. From whence it appears, that what we call a reward, is really an act of mercy, rather than of juſtice. The wages of *ſin* is death; but the *gift*, (ſays the apoſtle, altering his ſtyle, and making a moſt important diſtinction,) the gift of GOD is eternal life ‡.—The inſpired penman ſubjoins, not *for*, but *according to*, every man's works. His works are the meaſure, not the meritorious cauſe. To merit, is the ſole prerogative of the SAVIOUR. To him it is owing that our imperfect ſervices are honoured with any acceptance; much more that they are recompenſed with any reward.

Ther.

* *John* iii. 18, 36. The words are exceedingly emphatical, and no leſs awful.—Not barely he *ſhall* come into condemnation, but he (that believeth not) *is* condemned already. Tho' ever ſo civilized or refined in his outward converſation, he lyes under a ſentence of death, and is the object of divine wrath. —Which not only will *viſit* him, but *abideth* on him. So that, where-ever he may be, whatever he may do, the diſpleaſure of the tremendous JEHOVAH hangs over him, like a dreadful deſtructive ſword; which, if he dies in ſuch a condition, will inevitably fall upon him, and cut him in pieces eternally. † Pſal. lxii. 12. ‡ Rom. vi. 23.

Ther. Does not this expoſition of yours, claſh with that truly-generous acknowledgment of St *Peter? In every nation, he that feareth GOD, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him* *. Here, it is undeniably evident, that acceptance with our CREATOR is founded on a man's *own* piety, and *perſonal* integrity.

Aſp. Rightly to underſtand this text, we ſhould inquire into the circumſtances of the hiſtory.—The apoſtle had been ſtrongly and moſt unreaſonably prejudiſed in favour of the *Jews:* imagining, that the ſalvation of *CHRIST*, like the diſpenſation of *Moſes*, muſt be confined to his countrymen.—But now, having conſidered the purport of his late heavenly viſion; having compared it with the angelic meſſage delivered to *Cornelius;* and being made acquainted with the character of that valuable man; he breaks out into this truly-catholic declaration:—"My prejudices "are vaniſhed. My ſentiments are enlarged. From "the inſtance before me, it is *demonſtrably* certain, "that GOD does not appropriate the bleſſings of his "covenant to any particular perſon, family, or peo-"ple. *But, in every nation, he that feareth him, and,* "from a principle of religion in the heart, *worketh* "*righteouſneſs* in the life, *is accepted;* ſo accepted, "as to be an object of the divine favour, and an in-"heritor of eternal happineſs."

This, I think, is the exact meaning of the place. And let it be recollected, that no one truly *fears*, or can poſſibly *pleaſe* GOD, without faith †. For which reaſon, it is neceſſary to ſuppoſe, that *Cornelius*, tho' a Heathen by birth, had believed thro' grace.—Nay, it is evident from the context, that he had heard of *JESUS CHRIST:* had ſome acquaintance with the deſign of his coming, and the execution of his office ‡; enough to be the ground of a *real*, tho' perhaps

* Acts x. 35. † Heb. xi. 6.

‡ See *ver.* 36, 37. Indeed it could hardly be otherwiſe, ſince *Cornelius* was ſettled at *Cæſarea*, the reſidence of the *Lord*

haps an *infantile* faith. The buſineſs of the apoſtle was, to lead this convert into the *clear* light, and *full* privileges of the goſpel; to ratify and confirm his title to them, by the ſacred *ſeal* of baptiſm; and introduce him, as the *firſt-fruits* of the Gentiles, into the Chriſtian church.

So that nothing can be concluded from this paſſage, but that the glad tidings of *Chriſtianity* are for *Jews*, for *Gentiles*, for all people;—that faith, even when weak, is productive of good works;—and when ſincerely improved, will certainly be increaſed; "will "go from ſtrength to ſtrength."

Ther. Does not our SAVIOUR, in deſcribing the proceſs, and foretelling the iſſue of the laſt deciſive trial, aſſign a kingdom to the righteous? aſſign it in this preciſe view, as a proper remuneration of *their own* good works; ſaying in the moſt expreſs terms, *Come, ye bleſſed of my FATHER, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world:* FOR *I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat;* FOR, *&c.* FOR, *&c.* *

Aſp. Be pleaſed to take notice of the expreſſion. They are bidden to *inherit;* and what is freer than an inheritance?—Obſerve alſo the *reaſon* alledged, and compare it with the rule of judicature. *He that believeth*, ſaith the ſupreme JUDGE, *ſhall be ſaved.* This is the avowed, the invariable ſtandard, by which he proceeds in adminiſtering everlaſting judgment. Accordingly, he confers eternal life on the righteous, as perſons entitled to this great felicity, on the foot of his own gracious appointment.

FOR denotes, not the *foundation*, but the *evidence*

Lord Lieutenant, and ſeat of the *civil*, as *Jeruſalem* was of the *eccleſiaſtical* government. In a place of ſuch general reſort, ſo very remarkable an event could not be unknown; eſpecially, as *Philip* the evangeliſt had fixed his abode in that city. See *Acts* viii. 40. * Matth. xxv. 30.

of their right. "I acquit such a person," says the arbitrator in a judicial claim; "*for* the witnesses de-"pose, that the debt is paid." The deposition, which answers to these righteous acts, is the *proof;* payment of the debt, which corresponds with *CHRIST*'s perfect obedience, is the *cause* * of the discharge.—*For ye have given;* Ye have abounded in all instances of duty to ME, and love to your brethren; and thereby have manifested yourselves true believers.

It may be farther observed, that our LORD says not, Ye have done it to your fellow-creatures, but *to these my brethren* †. He commends not every random act of good-nature or generosity, but such kinds of beneficence only, as carry the *Christian* stamp; were exercised to a disciple, "in the name of a disciple." And *these* most evidently spring from faith; *these* undeniably attest its sincerity.

Ther. Are not these distinctions more *subtile*, than solid?

Asp. To me they appear in no such light. If you think otherwise, let us appeal to those excellent persons themselves. The turn, the very remarkable turn of their sentiments, will fully decide our question.—Do they lay *any stress* upon their own religious duties, and beneficent deeds? Far from relying on them, farther still from pleading them, they bestow not a *single thought* upon them. Having fixed their hopes on the ROCK of Ages, they forget these transient bubbles ‡. Nay, they *wonder*, that their exalted MASTER should

* The spring is come, says the countryman: *for* the orchyard blooms, and the black-bird sings. The blooming of the trees, and the melody of the birds, were never supposed to *create*, only to *characterize*, the delightful season. They are, not its cause, but the proof of its taking place.

† Matth. xxv. 40.

‡ *Bubbles* they are, compared with the all-glorious obedience of *CHRIST*, or considered in reference to the grand affair of justification before GOD.—But as bubbles, or watery vesicles inflated with air, are the means of exhibiting the beauti-

ful

should condescend to make any honourable mention of such imperfect services.—O! that we may be enabled, through the whole course of our lives, to follow the example of their piety; and, when we stand before the tremendous tribunal, to imitate their humility and wisdom! *Their humility*, in renouncing themselves, and disclaiming all desert of their own. *Their wisdom*, in reposing their whole confidence on the merits and righteousness of their REDEEMER.

Ther. Our LORD makes no mention of this doctrine, in his sermon on the mount. Whereas, if it had been so *very material*, he would at least have touched upon it, in that comprehensive summary of true religion.

Asp. Our LORD says not a word concerning the sacrifice of his death. Neither is there a syllable relating to his intercession for transgressors. But are these articles of our *faith* to be deemed fictitious or superfluous, because they are not expressly inculcated, in that admirable treatise of *practical* divinity?

However, upon a more attentive examination, perhaps, we shall find the point most strongly *implied*, though not distinctly *specified;* its necessity demonstrated, tho' its nature be not explained.—The illustrious TEACHER opened his mouth, and with a peculiar solemnity said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit* *.—But *who* are they? Not the persons who sooth themselves with the flattering conceit of the *Laodicean* church; *I am rich* in obedience, *and increased in* spiritual *goods* †. Those rather, who see their indigence, bewail their guilt, and hunger and thirst after the justifying merit of a REDEEMER; who, from the very bottom of an humbled heart, confess, "LORD, "I

ful colours of the *rainbow;* so these services, though poor and defective, *bear testimony* to the existence of that precious grace—*faith.*

* Matth. v. 3. † Rev. iii. 17.

" I am no more able to conform all my conduct to " thy moſt holy law, than I am capable of atoning " for my innumerable ſins. *CHRIST* muſt be my " righteouſneſs, as well as my propitiation, or elſe I " am irrecoverably undone."

The inimitable PREACHER farther aſſures his hearers, that, *unleſs their righteouſneſs exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, they ſhall in no wiſe enter into the kingdom of heaven* *.—How muſt Chriſtians exceed the Phariſees? Not only in being *ſincere*, in having reſpect unto *all* GOD's commandments, but alſo in poſſeſſing a *complete* righteouſneſs; ſuch as the divine holineſs can, with complacency, accept; and in which the divine juſtice may, with honour, acquieſce. Nor can this be any thing leſs, than the perfect obedience of the great MEDIATOR.—St *Paul's* memorable teſtimony, concerning his attainments in the *Phariſaical*, and his hopes in the *Chriſtian* ſtate †, afford the very beſt comment upon this important declaration of our LORD.

Ther. The ORACLE of heaven, you know, was once conſulted upon that moſt momentous of all queſtions, How a perſon may aſcertain his title to life and immortality? And what is the tenor of the ſacred reſcript?—We are referred to the ten commandments; and, in the moſt explicit terms, with the moſt peremptory air, told, *This* DO, *and thou ſhalt live* ‡.

Aſp. *That* particular perſon, if you pleaſe, was referred to the ten commandments; not *we*, and mankind in general.—Our LORD, in the preceeding verſes, had been informing his diſciples, that they muſt *receive the kingdom of GOD*, or the grace of the goſpel, and the bleſſings it propoſes, *as a little child.* And this can hardly ſignify, in conſequence of their own doings.

Ther. " That particular perſon referred to! Not we, " and

* Matth. v. 20. † Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9.
‡ Matth. xix. 17. Luke x. 28.

" and mankind in general!"—I don't understand your meaning, *Aspasio*.

Asp. You will observe then, that our LORD's reply was not an universal direction, but an answer *ad hominem;* peculiarly adapted * to the young gentleman's application: which, however it may be admired, was none of the wisest.—Instead of asking, " How " shall a *poor guilty* mortal, who is every day offend- " ing, obtain forgiveness from the righteous GOD?" instead of saying, " How shall I, who am not able to " think a *good thought*, make sure my title to an eter- " nal weight of glory?" our querist demands, *What good thing shall I* DO, *that I may inherit eternal life?* The reply proceeds upon the inquirer's own principles.—*If* you expect salvation upon such *legal* terms, " know, that your obedience must be nothing less, " than a *perfect* conformity to the divine law. Per- " form all its precepts, in their utmost extent, and " with an unremitted perseverance, then"—But alas! such perfection is too high for fallen creatures; they cannot attain unto it. Necessarily, therefore, must they drop all such pretensions, and have recourse to some other method of justification.

Ther. Why did that " wonderful COUNSEL- " LOR," if such was the purport of his answer, express himself so obscurely? Why did he not divert his promising scholar from this fruitless attempt, and put him in the right, the practicable way of obtaining salvation? *Asp.*

* It is delightful to observe the πολυποικιλος σοφια, the *curious variety*, yet the *consummate propriety*, of our LORD's conduct; how exactly this divine casuist suits his counsel to the different states and characters of mankind.—The secure and presumptuous he sends to the *law*, that they may be *humbled*. To the contrite and penitent he preaches the *gospel*, that they may be *comforted*.—When the *Pharisee*, full of self-conceit, stands up, and says, *What shall I do?* the answer is, *Do all that is commanded*. When the sinful woman falls at his feet, and speaks in tears the guilt of her life; *Thy sins are forgiven*, is the gracious reply.

Asp. This he did, with the fineſt addreſs, and in the moſt ſkilful manner.—Had our LORD affirmed, "You are worldly; you are covetous; your riches "are your GOD;" ſuch a charge would, in all probability, have been as confidently denied, as it was plainly urged. Therefore he brings this ſpecious hypocrite to *a teſt* *, which could not be evaded, and which was ſure to diſcover the truth: a teſt, which laid open the palpable and enormous defects of his ſo much boaſted obedience; which made it appear, that, inſtead of keeping *all* the commandments, this vain ſelf-juſticiary had not obeyed the very *firſt;* but, amidſt all his towering imaginations of himſelf, had been, and at that very inſtant was, a ſordid grovelling idolater; who preferred his tranſitory poſſeſſions on earth, to an everlaſting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven. —Could any expedient be more ſuitable to the caſe? or better calculated to reduce him, intoxicated as he was with pride, to a ſober humble mind? to beat him off from his falſe foundation, *the righteouſneſs which is of the law;* and lead him to a reliance on the promiſed, the expected, the preſent MESSIAH?

It puts me in mind of my friend *Sagacio*'s conduct; which ſeems to have ſome conformity with our LORD's procedure, and may, poſſibly, tend to illuſtrate its propriety.—Viſiting one of his unlearned neighbours, he found him in company with a certain talkative ſtranger; who was haranguing, at an *extravagant* rate, on the wonders of aſtronomy.—*Sagacio* ſoon perceived, that the chief furniture of this extraordinary adept, lay

* *Matth.* xix. 21. *If thou wilt be perfect, ſell all that thou haſte, and give to the poor.* This direction ſeems to be much of the ſame nature, with that other part of our LORD's reply, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* Both were perſonal, both occaſional, both adapted to particular circumſtances. The latter is no more the ſtated evangelical way to heaven, than the former is indiſpenſably obligatory on all Chriſtians.

lay in a little acquaintance with the technical terms, and somewhat more than a little share of assurance. How should he bring the self-plumed sciolist to a little *modesty* of sentiment, and *decorum* of conversation? He took leave to ask, "What the word *astronomy* "might signify?" The orator was struck dumb in a moment. He had never informed himself, it seems, that astronomy related to the order and regulation of the stars. This single question taught our minute philosopher, more effectually than twenty lectures on the subject. It taught him his *own ignorance*, and that he had the very rudiments of his so much admired science still to learn.

Ther. What will you say to those famous passages in the epistle of St *James: By works a man is justified. Was not Abraham our father justified by works* *? Can any words be plainer in their meaning? or can any meaning be more directly opposite to the whole scope of your argumentation?

Asp. This I would say, *Theron*:—The passages you quote, when detached from the context, may *seem* inconsistent with the declarations of another apostle; as a limb, when wrenched from its natural situation, appears with an air of disproportion. Whereas, reduce the dislocated part, and it will recover the symmetry of its shape; it will harmonize exactly with the animal system.—Replace likewise these assertions; consider them in *connection* with the whole paragraph; and they will be found, if not unisons, yet perfect concords, with the strain of St *Paul*'s teaching.

What is the point which St *James* undertakes to illustrate?—To distinguish a genuine from an insincere faith. *If a man* say, *he hath faith* †; this is mentioned, as the boast of some hypocritical professor. So that the apostle is evidently dealing with a *pretender* to the precious gift; and therefore replies, *Shew me thy*

* Jam. ii. 21, 24. † Jam. ii. 14.

thy faith: Prove the reality of thy claim; prove it to *me* and to the church, to thy fellow-creatures and fellow-*Chriſtians*. If unproductive of righteous and godly works, we muſt pronounce it ſpurious, worthleſs, dead.

Having detected the *counterfeit*, he proceeds to deſcribe the *ſterling*. The grand characteriſtic of which is, a frame of mind and a courſe of action, correſponding with the doctrine believed. By this touchſtone the faith of our renowned progenitor was tried; and, being tried, was "found unto praiſe, and honour, and "glory." *Was not Abraham our father juſtified by works?*—Juſtified! how? as to acceptance with the ſupreme JUDGE? No: this was effected, long before the patriarch offered up *Iſaac*. But when he exerciſed that heroic act of ſelf-denial, reſignation, and obedience, then his juſtification was evidenced, to all his contemporaries, and to all generations. *His faith was made perfect* *; anſwered its proper end; and appeared to be of the true, the triumphant, the ſcriptural kind; ſince it overcame the world, overcame ſelf, and regarded GOD as all in all.

Upon the whole, St *Paul* ſpeaks concerning the juſtification of our *perſons;* St *James* concerning the juſtification of our *faith* †.—St *Paul* deſcribes the *manner* of being juſtified before the all-ſeeing God; St *James* points out the *proof* ‡ of a juſtified ſtate, as it is

* Ετελειωθη. In this ſenſe, I ſuppoſe, we are to underſtand St *John*'s aphoriſm: *He that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous;* manifeſts the truth of his converſion, and *juſtifies* his profeſſion from the charge, and from the ſuſpicion of inſincerity, 1 *John* iii. 7.

† That the expreſſion uſed by St *James*, ſignifies this *declarative* juſtification, is plain from 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. where the apoſtle, ſpeaking of our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*, ſays εδικαιωθη, *He was juſtified in* or by *the SPIRIT; declared* to be the true SON of GOD; *manifeſted* on earth, and *recognized* from heaven, as the undoubted SAVIOUR of the world.

‡ A very little reflection, I ſhould imagine, muſt convince every

is visible to men.—The former proceeds from the immaculate righteousness of *CHRIST*, placed to our account; the latter consists in the fruits of righteousness, adorning our life.—Rightly understood, therefore, these passages are not in the least contradictory to the epistles of St *Paul*, or to the scope of my argumentation; but are a seasonable caveat, and a proper preservative, against misunderstanding *those*, or perverting *this*.

Ther. I wish you would read that concise, but judicious abridgment of true religion, comprised in the fifteenth *Psalm*. The sacred penman, for his own, and for the information of all mankind, asks, *LORD, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy holy hill?* To this most interesting inquiry, the following verses are a full and satisfactory answer: the whole of which turns upon the discharge of moral duties; *walking uprightly, and working righteousness;* without a syllable, or a single hint, concerning the very superior excellence of faith, or the extreme necessity of a vicarious obedience.

Asp. I have often read, and I well remember, that beautiful, that instructive *Psalm*. And I beg leave to observe, once for all, with relation to such passages of the Old Testament, that they suppose the persons whom they describe to be convinced of their *natural corruption*, to be humbled under a sense of their *actual* guilt, and to live in a conscientious observance of the *expiatory sacrifices*: all which had an invariable refer-

every unprejudised reader, that St *James* cannot possibly be stating the method of justification before the infinitely-righteous GOD: Because he never so much as mentions the death of *CHRIST—who made his soul an offering for sin—to whom give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins—and besides whom, there is no other name given under heaven, whereby we can be saved*—Could an apostle so *absolutely* forget his LORD; and in a case, where every other inspired writer acknowledges him; nay, acknowledges him to be ALL IN ALL!

ence to *CHRIST*, and derived their whole virtue from his mediation.

Would any of the *Jewish* saints, think you, have dared to advance a plea for eternal blessedness, upon the foot of their own conformity to such *moral* directions? neglecting, at the same time, the sacrifices of the three great festivals, or a believing improvement of the daily oblation.—By no means. They were, and they would acknowledge themselves, deplorably defective. They would plead the promise of free-grace, and fly to the blood, which GOD himself had appointed *to make an atonement for their souls*. —By such sentiments and such a conduct, they reduced to practice the very essence of our doctrine; disavowing their own deeds, however virtuous or religious; and trusting in the strength of *Israel*, *the LORD our righteousness*; who alone fulfilled all the precepts contained in this excellent formulary of duty; who was also the *substance* of every purifying and of every propitiatory rite.

Ther. Has not the sacred writer expressly said, at the close of the *Psalm*, *Whoso* DOTH *these things*, *shall never fall?*

Asp. He has: and this, I apprehend, is his meaning. —"Persons of such a temper, and such a practice, "bear the marks of GOD's children, and are meet "for his glory. Accordingly, they shall never fall, "either into total apostasy HERE, or final condem-"nation HEREAFTER. They are now heirs, and "in due time shall be possessors, of his eternal king-"dom."

But you will take notice, that all these duties and qualifications, only *characterize* not *constitute* the inheritor of heaven.—You will likewise advert to another very remarkable circumstance in the description: *He setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes* †.

Or,

† *Psal.* xv. 4. נמאס נבזה I cannot say, that I admire the

Or, as the more expreſſive original ſpeaks, he is *deſpicable* and *vile* in his own ſight. So far from aſpiring to *ſelf-juſtification*, that he even condemns and abhors himſelf; and falls down, as a moſt unworthy wretch, at the foot of infinitely-free grace.

Ther. I cannot but think, it is the *current doctrine* of ſcripture, and I am ſure, it is one of the *firſt principles* which the light of nature teaches,—That the moſt high GOD muſt neceſſarily love righteouſneſs, and take pleaſure in the righteous.

Aſp. If the light of nature was to publiſh a goſpel, I believe, it would be formed upon your plan. It would beſtow favour only on the *innocent*, the *virtuous*, and the *holy*.—But the goſpel of *CHRIST* runs in a very different ſtrain. This brings pardon for the condemned, and bleſſings for the accurſed. This is health to the ſick, and recovery to the ruined. *The LORD hath anointed me*, ſaith its divine AUTHOR, *to preach good tidings to the meek*, who are humbled under a ſenſe of their ſinfulneſs.—*He hath ſent me to bind up the broken-hearted*, who are wounded with a conviction of their undone ſtate;—*to proclaim liberty to the captives*, the wretched captives of *Satan; and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound*, bound in the chains of ignorance, impotence, and miſery *.

As

the Bible-tranſlation of this clauſe: *In whoſe eyes the vile perſon is contemptible.* Methinks, it does not ſavour of the tender and benign ſpirit of our religion, which teaches us to *honour all men;* to deſpiſe no one's *perſon*, but only to deteſt the *wickedneſs* of the wicked.

Should the ſenſe I have oppoſed, have its weight; the ſenſe I have preferred, is incomparably *weightier*. If to deſpiſe the vile, is a religious act; to think meanly of ourſelves, is a much more advanced, and a far more difficult inſtance of true religion. This is to copy the higheſt PATTERN of human excellence, who, notwithſtanding his very ſuperior attainments, accounted *himſelf leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints;* nay, *the very chiefeſt of ſinners.*

* *Iſ.* lxi. 1. Upon this paſſage of *Iſaiah* I would beg leave

to

As I am myſelf a moſt unworthy ſinner, you muſt not be diſpleaſed, if I eſpouſe the cauſe of thoſe unhappy creatures. Yet, tho' a friend of ſinners, I am no enemy to the righteous. I entirely agree with my *Theron* in allowing, that the moſt high GOD neceſſarily loves righteouſneſs. Only I want to be informed, *where* this admirable and lovely quality is to to be found?—Not among the *Gentiles*. They have ſwerved from the dictates of natural conſcience.—Not among the *Jews*. They have broke the holy commandment delivered on mount *Sinai*.—Not among *Chriſtians*. For, if GOD ſhould enter into judgment with us, we could not anſwer him one of a thouſand.—In the kingdom of *Æthiopia*, or in the country of the *Moors*, where will you find the *native* whites?

The SON of GOD found none among the race of

to obſerve, that the word *meek* ſeems not to anſwer or convey the prophet's idea. By *the meek*, we are inclined to think of perſons, endued with that placid and quiet ſpirit, which is in the ſight of GOD of great price. This might *diſcourage* many people, who know themſelves to be deſtitute of ſuch a gracious habit. This might lead others to ſuſpect, that ſome amiable diſpoſition is *previouſly* neceſſary in order to receive the benefits of redeeming grace. Which is a very miſtaken, and will prove a moſt uncomfortable forbidding notion.

The original עני ſignifies, in this place, *the afflicted*; not ſo much thoſe who are beautified with meekneſs, as thoſe who are oppreſſed with miſery; ſpiritual miſery eſpecially; not excepting even thoſe who are ſlaves to their own unruly paſſions. The *LORD JESUS* never finds, but makes people meek. Meekneſs is one of the fruits of his SPIRIT; one of the bleſſings which he beſtows on the unworthy.

The whole paragraph is a deſcription of extreme wretchedneſs. What can be more diſtreſſed than the man, whoſe outward circumſtances are impoveriſhed and *ruined;* whoſe ſpirit is *broken* under the weight of his calamities; who is taken *captive* by the enemy, is thrown into a *dungeon*, and loaded with *irons?*—This is the prophet's repreſentation; this is the picture of unconverted ſinners; and to theſe, *to theſe CHRIST JESUS* is a ranſom, a deliverer, a portion.

of *Adam*, that were entitled to the character of righteous. He who gave himſelf a ranſom for all, makes no application to ſuch perſons *.—Why? Becauſe he ſullenly *diſeſteemed* perſonal goodneſs, or was unable to *diſtinguiſh* the excellency of inherent virtue?—No; but becauſe he knew, that, amiable as theſe qualifications are, they have no exiſtence in the human heart, till the ſinner, reconciled by his death, be ſanctified alſo by his SPIRIT.

You remember, perhaps, that remarkable anſwer, which the *Spartans* once returned to a threatening embaſſy from ſome of the neighbouring ſtates. Nothing could be more conciſe; and, I think, nothing was ever more ſpirited and ſignificant.

Ther. Thoſe neighbours gave them to underſtand, by their ambaſſadors, "That, if they entered their "territories, they would burn their towns; make the "inhabitants priſoners; and ſpread deſtruction where-"ever they advanced".—To which inſolent menace the brave *Lacedemonians* made no other reply, than--IF.

Is this the ſtory to which you refer?

Aſp. The very ſame.—And when you are ſpeaking of human righteouſneſs, as the cauſe of our acceptance with the eternal GOD, I would borrow the language of a *Spartan*. IF, ſhall be my reply.—*If*, excluſive of the obedience, and independent on the SPIRIT of *CHRIST*, you can furniſh yourſelf with this endowment; or *if* you can carry your righteouſneſs to that perfection, which may equal the purity of the law, and comport with the majeſty of the LAWGIVER, *then* truſt in it; let it be the ground of your confidence; and ſeek no better foundation.

But whoever ſhall in this manner, ſeek for his recommendation to the favour of GOD, will act like the miſtaken countryman in *Horace*;—who, being unable to ford the river, took up a reſolution to wait, till the ſtream was all run by:

——*At*

* *Matth.* ix. 13. *I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.*

At ille
Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum *.

Ther. Here, I fancy, we must take leave of your countryman. If he adheres to his resolution, we shall find him in the very same situation, when breakfast is over; and may resume our subject, just where it is discontinued.

* *Vain man, desist: such flattering hopes forego:*
It flows, and flows, and will for ever flow.

DIALOGUE VII.

Ther. TO me, who have spent the greatest part of the winter in *town*, these scenes of the *country* are inexpressibly pleasing. Take who will the gilded saloon, and the silken settee; so long as I can shelter myself under the canopy of such a spreading beech, and use one of its coarse, mis-shapen roots for my seat.

'Tis true, we see no longer those splendid brocades, and elegant toupees, which distinguish the *Park* and the *Mall*.—But we have, full in our view, a multitude of honest rustics, pursuing their chearful labours in yonder *meadow;* some mowing the luxuriant herbage; some raising it into regular cocks; others loading their waggons with the hay, or clearing the ground with their rakes. The ground, cleared of its soft incumbrance, appears fresh and green, like another spring. While the exhalations of the tedded grass, floating in the air, give a rural perfume to the gale.—And which, my *Aspasio*, which are the most valuable objects? The *little labourers* of the hive, that enrich themselves, and regale their masters? or the *gay flutterers* of the garden, whose whole life is nothing but sport; and their highest character is, to be insignificantly pretty?

Asp. In this retirement, we hear none of the wanton and corrupting airs of the *opera;* no, nor the majestic and ennobling melody of the *oratorio* *.—But we have a band of music, stationed in the grove; and a concert of native harmony, warbling from the boughs. We are entertained with the music, which charmed the human ear, long before † *Jubal* found out his instruments; and thousands of years before *Handel* composed his notes.—The bull-finch, and a multitude of little tuneful throats, strike the key. The thrush below, and the sky-lark responsive from above, *diversify* and *exalt* the strain. The blackbird, somewhat like the solemn organ, with notes perfectly mellow, and gracefully sonorous, crowns the choir. While the turtle's melancholy voice, and the murmuring water's plaintive tone, *deepen* and *complete* the universal symphony.

This is the music, which constituted the first song of thanksgiving, and formed the first vocal praise, that the all-gracious CREATOR received from his new-made world. This is neither the parent of effeminacy, nor a pander for vice; but refines the affections, even while it amuses the imagination.

Ther. All the entertainments of nature, are calculated to secure our innocence, as well as to gratify our fancy. And what is another very agreeable circumstance, those gratifications which afford the sublimest pleasure, are exhibited *gratis*. While those which enervate the mind, and debauch the affections, must be *dearly*

* *Majestic* and *ennobling*.—This, I think, is the true character, and expresses the real tendency, of the *oratorio*. Nevertheless, it may not be improper to observe, that if we carry a trifling or irreligious spirit to the entertainment; if we attend to the musical airs, but disregard those sacred truths, which enter into the composition; such a behaviour will be little better than a *profanation* of holy things. I fear, it will be a species of *taking* GOD's adorable and glorious name *in vain*.

† Gen. iv. 21.

dearly purchaſed.—Every one cannot gain admittance into the boxes or the pit, when ſome celebrated *tragedy* is brought upon the ſtage. But every one may behold the beauteous exhibitions of *ſpring*, and the finiſhed productions of *autumn*. All may contemplate the machinery of nature, and the wonders of creation; thereby enjoying a far more exquiſite amuſement, without any of the guilt, or any of the danger.

The inhabitants of yonder villages have never beheld the ſplendid proceſſion, which ſolemnizes the coronation of a monarch? nor the *gaudy illuminations*, which diſtinguiſh the anniverſary of his birth. But they ſee, almoſt every morning, a much nobler ſpectacle diſplayed in the eaſt. They ſee the great *ruler* of the *day*, or rather the envoy from day's eternal SOVEREIGN, making his entry amidſt the ſpaces of the ſky.—The heavens are ſtrewed with colours, which outvie the pinks and carnations. The graſs is decked with dew-drops, and every plant is ſtrung, as it were, with pearls. All around the darkneſs retires, and ſweet refreſhing gales ariſe.—At length the magnificent luminary appears.—And what is all the oſtentatious pomp of kings? what is all the glitter of the moſt brilliant court? compared with his tranſcendent luſtre?—This ſpectacle we may behold, without loſs of time, or prejudice to health. Nay we cannot behold it, without *improving* one, and *redeeming* the other. So beneficial are even the pleaſures which nature yields; ſo ſerviceable the very diverſions, to which ſhe invites!

Aſp. Thus gracious is the almighty MAKER, in the conſtitution of *material* things. The ſubſtantial and the valuable, are open to every one; are acceſſible by all. Only the tinſel and the trappings, are the property of a few; the poor prerogative of wealth.

No leſs gracious is GOD, in the diſpoſal of *ſpiritual* favours. Theſe are infinitely more excellent; and yet are equally free. We are invited to *buy them*, *without*

without money, and without price *.—What do you give for the benefits of the rising sun, or the delights of this rural melody? The case is much the same, with regard to the righteousness, by which we are justified, and all the blessings of salvation.

Ther. This brings to our remembrance the countryman, whom we left on the banks of the river. And, for aught I can see, *Theron* and the rustic are pretty much upon a footing. The first as far from acceding to your notions, as the last is from gaining his point.

Asp. Have you any objection, *Theron*, to these gifts of nature, because they are neither purchased by your money, nor produced by your own toil?

Ther. But who can ever expect to obtain pardon, and acceptance, and eternal salvation, at so cheap a rate? It seems to be all delusion, *Aspasio*.

Asp. So cheap! Then you would pay somewhat, I perceive, by way of price.—But give me leave to ask, What price did you pay to GOD your MAKER, for fashioning you in your mother's womb? what price have you paid to GOD your PRESERVER, for upholding you ever since you was born? Or what price do you think of paying to GOD the supreme PROPRIETOR, for the ground on which you tread, for the air in which you breathe, for the light by which you see? Just the *same* price must you advance to GOD your SAVIOUR, for all his justifying merits.

Both *these* and *those* proceed from the same BENEFACTOR. They are all absolutely necessary, either for the welfare of the body, or the happiness of the soul. And they are all vouchsafed on the same free terms. For thus saith the prophet, *His going forth*, in the dispensation of the gospel, *is prepared as the morning. CHRIST*, with all his precious privileges, *shall come unto us as the rain; as the latter and former rain unto the earth* †.—However, if you are acquaint-

* Is. lv. 1. † Hos. vi. 3.

ed with a different, or a better way, be so good as to communicate your knowledge.

Ther. Some, you may observe, depend upon their *inoffensive* behaviour. They live peaceably. They do no harm to their neighbours. They are guilty of no gross offence against GOD. And why should they not hope to obtain his favour?—They apprehend the prophet *Samuel* establishes their hope, when he makes this solemn appeal; *Whose ass have I taken? whose ox have I taken? or whom have I defrauded *?*—Nay, they imagine, that our LORD himself has authorised their expectation, by giving this character of *Nathanael; An Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile* †.—A freedom from outward injustice and inward hypocrisy, is all the qualification, applauded in the one case, avowed in the other.

Asp. This negative goodness (if it deserves to be called goodness) was a plea for the empty *Pharisee*. But none, I presume, would chuse to be associated with *such* a companion, either in character here, or in condition hereafter.

Samuel, in the place you mention, is vindicating himself, only to his *fellow-creatures*, and only in the capacity of a *magistrate*. He speaks not of his justification before the JUDGE of quick and dead. This, he well knew, must be derived from another source, and must rest upon a firmer bottom.

The Israelite without guile, was a person, who not only abstained from every sin, but performed every duty; and without any *wilful neglect* of the one, or any *allowed indulgence* of the other. This instance, therefore, will by no means prove the sufficiency of your negative righteousness. Which seems to have just the same degree of excellency, as a fountain that never issues in water, or as a cloud that never descends in rain ‡.

Ther.

* 1 Sam. xii. 3. † John i. 47.

‡ *Vel lyra quæ reticet, vel qui non tenditur arcus.* CLAUDIAN.

Ther. In this particular, *Aſpaſio*, your ſentiments are mine.—But I would add *morality* to civility; the virtuous to the inoffenſive converſation. And if we not only ceaſe to do evil, but learn to do well; if we uſe temperance, exerciſe charity, and keep all the commandments to the *beſt of our power*, is not this a ſufficient foundation for our hope?

Aſp. Yes, *Theron;* if, as you add morality to your civility, you add *perfection* to both. Otherwiſe you muſt be ranked, not among the claimants, but among the delinquents. You have no title to a reward, but ſtand in need of pardon.

It is a principle of juſtice, founded on the unalterable conſtitution of things, That the debtor be acquitted when he has paid the debt. But ſuppoſing him, inſtead of gold to bring iron, inſtead of talents to return pence, inſtead of defraying, to increaſe the ſcore daily; can he *then* reaſonably expect, or legally claim a diſcharge?

With reſpect to ſuch an obedience, we may paſs our verdict in the figurative, but very expreſs language of *Iſaiah: The bed is ſhorter, than that a man can ſtretch himſelf on it; and the covering narrower, than that he can wrap himſelf in it* *. It can neither give reſt to the alarmed conſcience, nor afford protection to the guilty ſoul. If we have nothing better to plead, we ſhall not be able to lift up our heads, in the laſt deciſive judgment; but *muſt enter into the rock, and hide ourſelves in the duſt, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majeſty* †.

Ther. We will go a ſtep farther, and take in the exerciſe of *devotion*. We will read GOD's word; pray to his divine MAJESTY; and regularly attend on his public worſhip.—Here now are ſocial accompliſhments and moral virtues, completed by the performance of religious duties.

Aſp. Completed!—I fear that expreſſion will ſcarcely abide

* Iſ. xxviii. 20. † Il. ii. 10.

abide the teſt of a ſingle query. Have you then performed all your duties, with that ardent love of GOD, and undivided view to his glory; with that adoring gratitude to the bleſſed *JESUS*, and that child-like dependence on his SPIRIT; which the nature of things requires, and the ſcriptures of truth enjoin? —If not, your duties, be they moral, or religious, or both, are far from being complete. Nay, they are utterly defective; and, for that reaſon, abſolutely inſufficient for your juſtification. They are clipped or ſophiſticated coin. And will that be *current* in the world of glory?

Ther. Allowing them to be defective, they are at leaſt *ſincere*. And tho' not free from all alloy, yet if they bear the image and ſuperſcription of integrity, why ſhould they be rejected, as "reprobate ſilver *?" Why ſhould they not obtain the currency you mention?

Aſp. "Alas!"—ſays a judicious and admired writer, —"the imperfections of our beſt ſervices daily *forfeit* "the bleſſings of *time*. How impoſſible then is it, that "the ſincerity of them, amidſt ſo many frailties and "defects, ſhould *purchaſe* the glories of *eternity!*"

Ther. Be your writer ever ſo judicious, I can confront him with others, equally capable of judging, and diametrically oppoſite in opinion.—What ſays that wiſe and brave man, the ſucceſſor of *Moſes*, and generaliſſimo of the armies of *Iſrael? Joſhua*, I am ſure, declares himſelf on my ſide: *Fear the LORD, and ſerve him in ſincerity* †, is his laſt ſolemn charge to the people.—Even the great apoſtle, on a review of his miniſtry, makes it matter of ſelf-gratulation, that he *had his converſation in godly ſincerity* ‡.

Aſp. You have quoted the charge delivered by the ſervant, be pleaſed to recollect the proteſtation, made by the maſter: *Not for thy righteouſneſs*, ſays *Moſes*, *or for the uprightneſs of thy heart, doſt thou go to poſſeſs their land* ‖. Even an earthly *Canaan* was not given to the *Iſraelites*,

* Jer. vi. 30. † Joſh. xxiv. 14. ‡ 2 Cor. i. 12. ‖ Deut. ix. 5.

Israelites, as the reward of their own, either outward obedience, or inward sincerity. Much less can we expect the kingdom of immortality, on account of any uprightness of our intentions, or piety of our actions.

However, as the doctrine of sincerity is the favourite and the fashionable tenet, I will conform a little to the taste in vogue. You shall have no reason to complain, that I am either a *Cynic* or a *Stoic* *.—Let it suffice us to be sincere. Only let us refer ourselves to the apostle, for a description of this darling qualification. *That ye may be sincere, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by JESUS CHRIST, unto the praise and glory of GOD* †.

Here are three properties of acceptable sincerity.—It must bear fruits, *the fruits of righteousness;* and bear them abundantly, so that we may be filled with them.—The branch and the fruits must derive, *that* its vigour, *these* their flavour, and both of them their very being, from the all-supporting, all-supplying root *CHRIST JESUS*.—Then, instead of terminating in self-justification, they must redound to the honour of GOD. It is not said, these shall *justify* you, but these shall *glorify* your FATHER which is in heaven.

This kind of sincerity can never be too highly esteemed, nor too zealously encouraged. But this, you will observe, flows from the grace of *CHRIST*, and issues in the glory of GOD; therefore does but very poorly attest, either the sufficiency of *human ability* to perform good works, or the sufficiency of *human works* to win the prize of our high calling.

Ther. Do you then exclude all works? Will you make a mere nothing, both of our *moral* endowments, and of *your* evangelical obedience?

Asp. They are excluded, both the one and the other, from all share in justifying us: yet not by me, but

* The *Cynic* had no complaisance, the *Stoic* was quite inflexible. † Phil. i. 10, 11.

but by an authority, to which there can be no objection, and from which there lyes no appeal. Speaking of salvation, thus saith the wisdom of GOD, *Not of works*—

Ther. Works of the *ceremonial* law, I suppose. These, we all acknowledge, are, under the Christian dispensation, as a bond cancelled, or an act repealed. But sure you will allow a better office, and a nobler character, to that course of obedience, which is regulated by the commands of *CHRIST*.

Asp. St *Paul* will allow it no such office, as that for which my *Theron* is pleading. *Ye are saved*, says the apostle. Ye are delivered from wrath, reconciled to GOD, and made heirs of his kingdom.—How? *By grace, through faith* *. *Grace*, like a magnificent sovereign, from the riches of his own bounty, and without any respect to human worthiness, confers the glorious gift. *Faith*, like an indigent petitioner, with an empty hand, and without any pretence to personal desert, receives the heavenly blessing.

Both grace and faith stand in direct opposition to works; *all* works whatever. Whether they be works of the law, or works of the gospel; exercises of the heart, or actions of the life; done in a state of nature, or done under the influences of grace; they are, all and every of them, *equally* set aside in this great affair.

That the bill of exclusion is thus extensive, or rather quite *unlimited*, appears from the reason assigned; *Lest any man should boast* †: that all pretence of glorying may be cut off from fallen creatures; that the whole honour of obtaining salvation, may be appropriated to HIM, who *hid not his face from shame and spitting*.—And is he not worthy, unspeakably and infinitely worthy, to receive this unrivalled honour, as a recompense for his unparalleled humiliation?

Ther. All our good works, we allow, are recommended

* Eph. ii. 8. † Eph. ii. 9.

mended by *CHRIST*. They prevail for our justification, only through his merits. So that we still depend upon the REDEEMER; and, by this means, pay him the highest honour.

Asp. Depend upon the REDEEMER! No, my dear friend. You rely upon your own pious acts, and moral qualifications. They, *they* are your grand recommendation. The office consigned over to the divine *JESUS*, is nothing more than to be (as it were) *master of the ceremonies*. He may have the credit of introducing your fine accomplishments, with a kind of graceful air.—But is *this* an office suited to his incomparable dignity? Was it for *this* that he bowed the heavens, and partook of our nature? Was it for *this* that he became subject to the law, and obedient unto death? *Only* for *this*, that he might usher in our own endowments, with a plume and a scarf?—Surely, *Theron*, you can never entertain such low thoughts of the incarnate GOD, and of *CHRIST*'s mediatorial undertaking.

Ther. Neither can I entertain such *low* and *vilifying* thoughts of our own virtuous attainments. They distinguish persons of eminence and worth, from the sordid wretch and execrable villain; just as the noble faculty of reason distinguishes the man from the brute.

Asp. To deny good works the merit of justifying us, is very different from vilifying them.—You are going to build a new house, *Theron*. Pray, do you intend to hew your timber from the flimsy tendrils of the vine?

Ther. No, certainly *.

Asp. Because you don't think its feeble shoots proper, to form the beams, and support the roof, of your intended edifice; do you, therefore, affront them, depretiate

* *No, certainly*.—Perhaps it may be worth our while to observe, that this is the meaning of a very *obsolete* expression, which occurs in our translation of (ου δοκω,) *Luke* xvii. 9. *I trow not*.

depretiate them, or disallow their usefulness?—By no means.—They may *beautify* your walls with their ornamental spread, and *enrich* the dessert with their delicious fruit. This is an office suitable to the nature of the plant; and from this it receives sufficient estimation, without pretending to the honours of the oak.

Virtuous attainments, I own, are a considerable distinction, in the present state of things. And, what is a higher encomium, (I shall now outshoot you in your own bow,) they will distinguish the true believer from the hypocritical professor, even at the great tribunal.—But let them be content with their province, and not intrude upon the SAVIOUR's prerogative. To *effect* justification, be *his;* to *discriminate* the justified, *theirs*.—Neither let them elate their possessors with a vain conceit of themselves; who, tho' they were meek as *Moses*, holy as *Samuel*, and wise as *Daniel*, must confide in nothing, but the boundless mercies of the LORD; must plead nothing, but the infinite merits of his *CHRIST*.

This is the theology, both of the *Psalmist*, and of St *Paul*. They derive the blessedness promised in scripture, not from the shallow stream of human accomplishments, but from the inexhaustible ocean of divine grace. *Blessed is he, whose unrighteousnesses are forgiven, and whose sins are covered* *.

Ther. Will *Aspasio* then, like many of our modern disputants, *mutilate* the holy word? industriously display what seems to strengthen his argument, but artfully secrete what tends to overthrow his scheme? How could you forget, or why should you suppress, the following clause? *and in whose spirit there is no guile*.—Was you afraid, it would demolish your opinion; and point out an *upright*, *honest* mind, as the cause of this blessedness?

Asp. Far was I, my dear *Theron*, from any such groundless

* Psal. xxxii. 1. Rom. iv. 7.

groundleſs apprehenſions; and equally far from all ſuch deluſory deſigns. *Shall I talk deceitfully for GOD*?* His ſacred cauſe does not need it, and his exalted Majeſty would diſdain it. No; I would condemn my tongue to eternal ſilence, rather than ſpeak a ſyllable, either to conceal, or diſguiſe the truth.

Moſt readily we will admit the ſentence you mention: *In whoſe ſpirit there is no guile.* It is evident from the context, that theſe words are not deſcriptive of a perſon, in whoſe heart and converſation there *is* no iniquity; but of a penitent ſinner, whoſe mouth freely *confeſſes* the iniquity of them both; confeſſes without any reſerve, or the leaſt attempt to palliate.—Which, inſtead of invalidating, corroborates my argument: ſince, according to your own allegation, the higheſt merit conſiſts in a free acknowledgment of ſin, or a total renunciation of all worthineſs.

Ther. When, therefore, we join *repentance* to all our other works; lament our deficiencies, and implore forgiveneſs; ſurely this muſt be available with a merciful GOD, and cannot but entitle us to the happineſs of heaven.

Aſp. How ſtrange does it ſound, at leaſt in my ears, for poor, miſerable, guilty creatures, to talk of entitling themſelves to the happineſs of heaven, by any deeds of their own! when it is owing wholly to GOD's rich *forbearing mercy*, that they are not tranſmitted to hell; owing wholly to GOD's free *preventing grace*, that they are enabled to think a good thought.

But not to enlarge upon this conſideration:—I would aſk, whether thoſe penitential exerciſes were attended with a hearty deteſtation of ſin, and an utter abhorrence of the ſinner†?—If they *were*, you would then renounce yourſelf univerſally. You would never think of placing the leaſt dependence on any thing of your own; nay, you would even loath yourſelf.—If they *were not*, then your very repentance falls ſhort,

* Job xiii. 7. † Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

and is to be repented of. It is as if *one came to the press-fat for to draw out fifty vessels, and there were but twenty* *. It is, if I may continue the prophet's metaphor and the prophet's language, *the scant measure; which*, in this your spiritual traffic, as well as in the affairs of secular commerce, *is abominable* †.

Or, should your repentance be without a failure, and without a flaw; I must still say to my friend, as our LORD replied to the young ruler, *One thing thou lakest*. In all these acts of humiliation, you have only taken shame to yourself; whereas a righteousness is wanting, which may magnify the law, and make it honourable.—Should GOD, without insisting upon this, pardon and reward, he would not act according to his glorious character; nor be, at once, *a just GOD, and a SAVIOUR* ‡.—And if you can find this righteousness, *either in the depth, or in the height above;* in any person or any object, save only in the imputed obedience of our *LORD JESUS CHRIST;* I retract whatever I have advanced.

Ther. A preacher and an author has lately assured us, that we are to be "accepted of GOD, and saved "by our own obedience." If so, I need not scruple to repeat my assertion, that our own duties, especially when accompanied with repentance, are a *real* and *proper* foundation for life eternal.

Asp. Then the apostle was under a great mistake, when, treating of *CHRIST* and his merits, he ventured to assert, *Other foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid, even JESUS CHRIST* §.

Ther. If you will not credit a modern preacher, I can produce a decision, made by one of the most ancient and authoritative *synods; Then hath GOD also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life* ‖.—*Repentance unto life*, is *their* unanimous voice, and *my* unexceptionable voucher.

Asp.

* Hag. ii. 16. † Mic. vi. 10. ‡ Is. xlv. 21.
§ 1 Cor. iii. 11. ‖ Acts xi. 18.

Asp. I can eaſily gueſs the aſſembly, to which you refer. But I can hardly grant it the venerable name of a *ſynod*. It conſiſted of ſome *Judaizing* converts; who adhered, with a tenacious and bigotted zeal, to the *Moſaic* rites.—However, though I might ſcruple my *Theron*'s appellation, I readily acquieſce in *their* determination.

It is not ſaid, thoſe *Gentiles* were penitent, and *therefore* God granted them life. This ſhould have been the language of the aſſembly, in order to eſtabliſh my friend's way of thinking.—On the contrary, they were *dead* in ſin. GOD, of his free goodneſs, granted them repentance: which is both the beginning and a ſubſtantial part of *true* life; even of that life, which is founded on juſtification, is carried on by ſanctification, and completed in glory.

I would farther obſerve, that repentance is a *turning of the heart*. And when it is repentance unto life, it is a turning of the heart from every other object, to the great and ſole fountain of good, *CHRIST JESUS**.—Were men ſlaves to ſenſuality? When they repent, they are turned to *CHRIST*, for refined and heavenly affections. Were they wont to confide in themſelves, and their own works? As ſoon as they truly repent, they turn to *CHRIST* for a better righteouſneſs; and, thereby, for everlaſting acceptance with GOD.—In ſhort, they turn from every falſe ſtay, and fly only to *CHRIST;* depend only on *CHRIST:* looking, not to their own tears or humiliation, not to their own duties or graces; but *looking for the mercy of our LORD JESUS CHRIST unto eternal life* †.

Ther. Suppoſe it ſhould be wrong, to expect ſuch a vaſt reward, as the inconceivable glories of heaven, on account of our own duties; yet to ſet them *wholly* aſide, to allow them *no* influence at all, not ſo much as the *leaſt* co-operation, in turning the ſcale; this is an

* Acts xix. 4. † Jude, ver. 21.

an exceſs on the other hand. If the former is *preſumption*, the latter is *fanaticiſm*.

Aſp. I muſt confeſs, I do not thoroughly underſtand what you mean by fanaticiſm. Neither is it of much ſignificancy, to enter upon the diſquiſition of an obnoxious term. I would only maintain, that on us unworthy ſinners whatever is beſtowed by the righteous GOD, is beſtowed, not as a debt * to our works, but as the donation of pure *grace*.

Ther. I think, it is ſufficiently of grace, if we acknowledge good works to be wrought by the aſſiſtance of the divine SPIRIT; and then admitted, together with our SAVIOUR's merits, as a recommendation to the divine favour.

Aſp. The *Phariſee* could make his acknowledgments for the aſſiſtance of grace: *GOD, I thank thee*, was his language. Yet this did not exempt him from the charge of *pride*, nor ſecure him from the ſin of *boaſting*. Beſides, if good works are wrought by the operation of the divine SPIRIT, they draw a bill upon our gratitude, not upon the bank of heaven; they render us the *obliged*, not the *deſerving* party. To think or teach otherwiſe, is errant *Popery* †, however it may lurk under a veil of *Proteſtantiſm*.

You bring to my mind a memorable ſtory.—Two perſons were travelling through the deſerts of *Arabia*. The one utterly unarmed; the other wore a ſword, and carried a muſket. As the place was exceedingly dangerous,

* *Beſtowed* as a *debt*, is, I muſt allow, ſomewhat like jargon. But, perhaps, *jargon* and *inconſiſtency* may not be without their *propriety* in this place; as they tend to ſhew the genius of *that* doctrine, which would connect ſuch contradictory ideas.

† *Good works*, ſays a champion for the church of *Rome*, *are* mercatura regni cœleſtis, *the price we pay*, or *the commodity we barter, for the kingdom of heaven.*—Another zealot of that communion declares, Cœlum gratis non accipiam, *It ſhall never be ſaid, that I receive heaven merely as a matter of alms.*—So ſpeaks *he!* but, bleſſed be GOD, *we* have not ſo learned CHRIST.

dangerous, the latter, ſolicitous for the ſafety of his companion, makes him a preſent of his fire-arms.—Which was no ſooner done, than a lion eſpies them, and advances fiercely towards them. The foremoſt diſcharges his piece, and wounds their horrid aggreſſor. The wound, neither killing, nor diſabling, only enrages the monſter. He ſeizes the unfortunate markſman, and is upon the point to tear him limb from limb. His fellow-traveller flies to his ſuccour; ſnatches up the carbine, which dropt from the other's hand; and fells the ravenous beaſt to the ground. Then, drawing his ſword, ſtabs him to the heart, and reſcues his friend.

The lion thus ſlain, they take off the ſkin: which, he who ſlew the lordly ſavage, claims as his own. "No," ſays his *grateful* friend, "as you did part of "the execution with *my* weapon, I inſiſt upon half of "the ſhaggy ſpoil. I expect ſatisfaction likewiſe for "the loſs of my piece, which you broke in the encounter."—To obtain both, he commences a law-ſuit againſt that generous aſſociate, who not only *gave* him the weapon, but *ſaved* the proſecutor from the very jaws of deſtruction.

Ther. If I had been judge, I ſhould, without much heſitation, have determined ſuch a cauſe. Inſtead of *coſts* and *damages* for my plaintiff, I ſhould have tranſmitted the wretch to the pillory.

Aſp. I believe, all the world would applaud your ſentence.—Only be pleaſed to remember, that the procedure, on which you ſo juſtly animadvert, is the *very picture* of our exceſſive unreaſonableneſs, if we preſume to write ourſelves creditors, and the divine BEING debtor; becauſe he has delivered us from the bondage of corruption, and enabled us to perform the duties of godlineſs.

Theron pauſed, as ſomewhat ſtruck by the repreſentation. After a ſhort interval, *Aſpaſio* reſumed the diſcourſe.

Believe

Believe me, my dear friend, salvation, both in the root, and all its branches, is *entirely* of grace. Or else believe me, for the many cogent testimonies of scripture, which most circumstantially ascertain this great truth. *Election* is of grace: *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children*, not on account of human worthiness, but *according to the good pleasure of his will* *.—Equally gratuitous is our effectual *vocation: GOD hath called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace* †.—*Faith*, with all its precious fruits, is owing to the same cause: *By grace ye are saved through faith* ‡.—From hence springs *justification*, together with all its attendant privileges: *Being justified freely by his grace* §.—This is the origin of *regeneration*, and every living principle of godliness: *Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth* ‖.—The *consummation* of bliss flows from the same all-supplying source: *The gift of GOD is eternal life* ++: It is, in every respect, a gift; not only without, but contrary to, all desert of ours.—So that the foundation is laid in the riches of grace; the superstructure is reared by the hand of grace; and when the top-stone is brought forth, when our felicity is completed

* Eph. i. 5. † 2 Tim. i. 9. ‡ Eph. ii. 8.

§ *Rom.* iii. 24. Δωρεαν τη αυτυ χαριτι. *One* of these words might have served to convey the apostle's meaning. But he *doubles* his assertion, in order to give us the fullest conviction of the truth, and to impress us with a sense of its *peculiar importance*: FREELY BY HIS GRACE.—Is it possible to find out a form of speech, that should more *absolutely* exclude all consideration of our own works and obedience? or that should more *emphatically* ascribe the whole of our justification to free, uninfluenced sovereign goodness?—To find an expression *more* forcible for the purpose, will puzzle invention itself. But *this* expression we find used, again and again, by the sacred writer; Η δωρεα εν χαριτι, Rom. v. 15. Της χαριτος & της δωρεας, Rom. v. 17.

‖ Jam. i. 18.

++ *Rom.* vi. 23. Χαρισμα, which is a more expressive word than δωρημα, and conveys the idea of *freest* favour.

completed in the kingdom of heaven, the everlasting acclamation will be, *Grace, grace unto* * *it!*

This is that glorious gospel, which human learning could never have discovered; which carnal reason cannot understand; which the wisdom of this world accounteth foolishness; which the envy of the devil and the pride of man, will always oppose.

Ther. What say you to the opinion, which *Ouranius* so strenuously maintains, That we are justified, not by the merits of *CHRIST imputed* to us, but by *CHRIST* himself *formed* in our hearts? And *Ouranius* is none of your proud or carnal people. His writings are remarkable for their strict piety, and his life is as exemplary as his principles.

Asp. You know, *Theron*, I have nothing to do with the persons of men, but with the truths of the gospel. *Ouranius*, though eminently devout, may be mistaken. And, if this is his way of thinking, he quite misapprehends the doctrine of grace.

What is written in the oracles of scripture? *The LORD justifieth the ungodly* †. What is implied in the maxim of *Ouranius?* HE justifieth the holy, the heavenly, the Christ-like.—*A man is justified by faith* ‡, says the secretary of heaven. He is justified by works, says the pen of *Ouranius:* only let them be works of a superior order; such as are internal, spiritual, and wrought by the operation of *CHRIST* in the soul.—According to this notion, every one is justified by his own love, his own purity, his own zeal. Whereas, an unerring writer has most solemnly declared, that *by* ONE *man's obedience many*, many myriads of sinners, even all the redeemed world, *shall be made righteous* ‖.

This notion, I think, is *legalism* in its greatest subtilty, or highest refinement. It disannuls the *merit* of *CHRIST;* it vacates all *imputation;* and makes our salvation to consist *wholly* in the work of sanctification.

Against

* Zech. iv. 7. † Rom. iv. 5. ‡ Rom. v. 1. ‖ Rom. v. 19.

Againſt which, if you remember, I entered my proteſt, in one of our firſt * conferences. And now having ventured to animadvert on the tenets of others, it may reaſonably be expected, that I ſhould give an account of my own faith.—"I am juſtified; "my ſoul is accepted; not becauſe *CHRIST* has "put his laws in my mind, but ſhed his blood for my "ſins; not becauſe I *myſelf* am enabled to walk in "all godly converſation, but becauſe the *LORD* "*JESUS* has fulfilled all righteouſneſs as my "*Surety*."

Ther. I am for neither of the extremes. The middle way is moſt eligible. This is what ſound ſenſe approves, and the ſacred ſyſtem authoriſes. *Whoſo believeth on me*, ſays our LORD, *ſhall not periſh, but ſhall have everlaſting life* †. *Bleſſed*, adds the beloved diſciple, *are they who do his commandments; that they may have a right to the tree of life; and may enter in, through the gates into the city* ‡.

Conformably to theſe texts of ſcripture, I would neither reject our REDEEMER's merits, nor repudiate good works. As this ſhady tree, and theſe cooling breezes, unite their properties, to render our ſituation agreeable; ſo thoſe two cauſes, acting in conjunction, exalt us to the favour of GOD, and conſtitute us heirs of heaven.—GOD himſelf has joined them. And I muſt urge my remonſtrance in our LORD's own words, *What GOD hath joined together, let not man put aſunder.*

Aſp. Would you then make impotence itſelf a *coadjutor* with omnipotence?—Does this humble the ſinner? does this exalt the SAVIOUR?—No: it is a moſt injurious infringement of his mediatorial dignity. Inſtead of excluding, it evidently introduces boaſting. In conſequence of ſuch a ſcheme, it would be ſaid by the

* *See* Dialogue II. *pag.* 67.

† John iii. 15. ‡ Rev. xxii. 14.

the inhabitants of the heavenly world, "Thanks to "our bleſſed REDEEMER for this happineſs! yet "not to him *only*, but to our own righteouſneſs alſo."

Can you imagine, that the obedience of *CHRIST* is *inſufficient* to accompliſh our juſtification? Muſt its efficacy be reinforced by the acceſſion of our works? —And what are theſe works of ours, that *they* ſhould inhance the value, the immenſe value, of our REDEEMER's!—*Maimed, tarniſhed, worm-eaten* things; eaten by the worms of ſelf-ſeeking, ſelf-admiring, ſelf-love; tarniſhed by a thouſand vanities; maimed by ten thouſand negligencies.—To join *theſe* in commiſſion with our divine MASTER's righteouſneſs, would be infinitely more *diſgraceful*, than to tack the beggar's rag on the monarch's robe; would be altogether as *needleſs*, as to dream of augmenting the ſea, by the drops of our bucket.

Ther. Worm-eaten! What reaſon have you to repreſent our acts of obedience under this ſordid and ſhameful image?

Aſp. I thought, you could hardly brook this diſparaging expreſſion. It is ſomewhat like *petty treaſon* againſt the dignity of man. My reaſons I would poſtpone to ſome other opportunity; when, if you pleaſe, we will give the cauſe a full hearing.

At preſent, to make amends for this vile ſlander, I will ſuppoſe your works to have *no* defect; nay, to have *all* the perfection which you yourſelf could wiſh. —Will you *glory* on this account?—You are too modeſt, I am ſure, to avow or patronize ſuch a practice. Yet, if we ſay or think, concerning any attainments of our own, "This is the ground on which I expect "to eſcape condemnation, and inherit life;" we do, in the moſt *offenſive*, though not in the moſt *explicit* manner, glory *.

Or,

* *Omnis cauſa juſtitiæ et ſalutis eſt materia et objectum* κατ' ἐξοχήν. *Unde*

Or, will you reckon, that these services, because faultless, are, in any degree, meritorious? Let us hear our LORD's decision in the case. *When ye have done* not only some, but *all those things which are commanded you.*—And where is the man, or what is his name, who, in any nation or in any age, has done all that is commanded?

Where shall I find him? Angels, tell me where?
Shall I see glories beaming from his brow?
Or trace his footsteps by the rising flow'rs?

Yet even in such a case, if all this were performed, what shall we *say? We are* no better than *unprofitable servants; we have done* nothing more, than *what was our* indispensable *duty to do* *; and have, on this footing, just the same claim to honours and rewards, as the *negro* slave, after the dispatch of his daily business, has upon the estate or the wealth of an *American* planter.

Ther. But what say you to those passages of scripture which I have quoted? You have given them a hearing, but no answer. They, I do insist upon it, expressly *assert*, therefore incontestably *prove*, an union of *CHRIST*'s merit and our own works, in the business of salvation.

Asp. It is written in the book of *Revelation*, *Blessed are they that do his commandments.* And wherefore? Because the obedience of faith is attended with a real blessedness on earth, and demonstrates our title to eternal blessedness in heaven. It is, tho' not the *purchase*, yet the *evidence* of our right to the tree of life.

All

Unde apostolus: Nam si Abraham ex operibus justificatus est, ἐχει καυχημα, i. e. Whatever is the cause of righteousness and salvation, is a real and proper foundation for glorying. Therefore the apostle acknowledges, *If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory*, Rom. iv. 2.

VITRING.

* Luke xvii. 10.

All this I acknowledge. But where, I beſeech you, does the ſcripture join the obedience of *CHRIST* and the obedience of man, as mutually conducive to the juſtification of a ſinner?—The ſcripture utterly *diſavows* ſuch a copartnerſhip, and aſſerts what our homily expreſſes; "Surely, there can be no work of any "mortal man (be he ever ſo holy) that ſhall be cou"pled in merit with *CHRIST*'s moſt holy act†."—The ſcripture ſteadily declares, that, in this greateſt of tranſactions, *CHRIST* is not an acceſſary, but the principal; nay, that he is ALL. *Be it known unto you, men, and brethren, that, thro' this* illuſtrious and exalted *PERSON* ‡, *is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins; and by him all that believe are juſtified from all things.—Thro' this PERSON*, without any partner or coadjutor. *By him;* not by him and our works jointly, but by him ſolely; without the concurrence of any other action, or any other agent. This was typified by the high prieſt, when on the ſolemn day of expiation, he went into the tabernacle *alone*, and made the figurative atonement without any aſſociate ‖.—*From all things;* by HIM they are *wholly* as well as *ſolely* juſtified: freed from every charge, whether of omiſſion or commiſſion; and rendered, not in part only, but compietely acceptable.

I hope, therefore, you will no longer conſider the ſupremely-excellent *JESUS*, as a *partial* cauſe of our juſtification.—What would be the conſequence, if a perſon ſhould fix one foot on the bank of yonder river, and reſt another on the fluid ſtream?

Ther. He muſt unavoidably fall.

Aſp. And what ſays our divine INSTRUCTOR to thoſe double-minded *Galatians*, who could not believe

† Homily on *Good-Friday*.

‡ *Acts* xiii. 38 Δια τυτυ. the word *man* is not in the original. So that I think, *this* illuſtrious and exalted *PERSON*, is the fulleſt and moſt exact tranſlation.

‖ Lev. xvi. 17.

lieve themſelves ſafe and complete in the merits of *CHRIST* alone; but muſt be ſeeking ſome other foundation, on which to repoſe *a ſhare* at leaſt of their confidence? He ſays; and they are awful words; they call for my *Theron*'s moſt ſerious regard; *Ye are fallen from grace* *.

Let me intreat my friend to beware of this error. I think, it is the prevailing error of our times; and ſo much the more *dangerous*, becauſe it is ſomewhat ſpecious.—To pour contempt upon the bleſſed *JESUS*, with the *Libertines* and *Deiſts*, would be ſhocking to a mind that retains the leaſt reverence for ſacred things. Entirely to ſet aſide the meritorious efficacy of his undertaking, with the *Arians* and *Socinians*, would be afflictive to a conſcience that is impreſſed with the leaſt ſenſe of ſin. Whereas, to erect our merits on the foundation of *CHRIST*'s; to be found in *his*, yet not renounce *our own* righteouſneſs; this is both plauſible to our reaſon, and pleaſing to our vanity. This ſeems to honour the divine SAVIOUR, even while it gratifies human pride.—But this is an egregious falſehood, and cannot ſtand. This is an abominable idol, and muſt be laid in the duſt. *CHRIST*, like the *real* mother of the child, will have the whole, or none †; the whole—*unſhared*—*unrivalled*—*undiminiſhed* glory of our ſalvation.

Let me once again intreat my dear *Theron*, to beware of this error. It is the main pillar in the *Roman* hereſy, and the maſter-policy of the *Popiſh* Machiavilians. "*CHRIST* hath merited, that we may merit," is their grand maxim, and their grand deluſion. Hence come their penances and their pilgrimages; hence the hypocritical mortifications of ſome, and the extravagant auſterities of others: this enriches their ſhrines, and fills their cloyſters. And to thoſe ſeminaries of ſuperſtition, let it be baniſhed, let it be confined.—*There* let them raiſe their ſcaffolding, and

* Gal. v. 4. † 1 Kings iii. 26.

and try to enlarge the dimensions of the sky. *There* let them kindle their flambeaux, and attempt to increase the lustre of the sun. And when they have effected this *easier* task, then will we *Protestants* follow their example, and adopt their system. Then will we also think of adding our own righteousness, by way of supplement to the dignity and efficacy of our LORD's.

Ther. If we are justified wholly by our LORD's righteousness; if nothing *need* be added, if nothing *can* be added to its all-comprehending fulness; what becomes of the generally-received opinion, that *CHRIST* obtained for us only a *possibility* of being saved; or put us into a *capacity* of acquiring salvation;

Asp. It will be discountenanced and overthrown, as extremely dishonourable to the REDEEMER, and no less uncomfortable to the redeemed. When *CHRIST* procured our pardon, and recovered our title to life, it was all his own doing. *Of the people there was none with him* *. In both cases his work was perfect.—Hear his own testimony: *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do* †. Should you want an explication of these words, I refer you to the comment of an apostle: *He*, that is, *JESUS CHRIST, has obtained eternal redemption for us* ‡. This was his work, and it is fully executed. *He has*, HE HAS, obtained eternal redemption; and left nothing for his people, but to accept the glorious purchase, and live as becomes the redeemed of the LORD.

This truth is written, as with a sun-beam, in the pages of the gospel; and sounds, as with a voice of thunder, in the songs of heaven. *Salvation to our GOD*, they cry, *that sitteth upon the throne, and to the LAMB* ‖. Those saints in glory ascribe the whole,—*the whole* of their salvation they ascribe, to the grace of GOD, and to the blood of the LAMB.

Ther. Have not many of our ablest divines represented faith, obedience, and repentance, as the *terms of acceptance?*

* lxiii. 6. † John xvii. 4. ‡ Heb. ix. 12. ‖ Rev. vii. 10.

acceptance? CHRIST, according to this account, procured not the bleſſing itſelf, but only the grant of *eaſier conditions*, on which it may be enjoyed.

Aſp. What ſays that ſublime BEING, who gives the ableſt divines all their wiſdom? *My righteous ſervant ſhall juſtify many* *; not pave the way, or adjuſt the preliminaries, but diſpatch *the very* buſineſs;—*ſhall juſtify*.—The terms of acceptance, for fallen and rebellious man, were, a full ſatisfaction to the divine juſtice, and a complete conformity to the divine law. Theſe, impracticable by us, were conſigned over to *CHRIST*. By him they were thoroughly accompliſhed; and by this accompliſhment of them, he purchaſed for us all bleſſings. Among others, he purchaſed the gift of faith, the grace of repentance, and ability to yield thankful, dutiful, evangelical obedience. Theſe therefore are very improperly called the *terms*, which are really conſtituent *parts* of our ſalvation.

To ſum up all in a word—The whole tenor of revelation ſhews, that there are but two methods, whereby any of the human race can be juſtified.—Either by a perfect obedience to the law, in *their own* perſons; and then the reward is of debt †:—Or elſe, becauſe the *Surety* of a better covenant has ſatisfied all demands in their ſtead; and then the reward is of grace.—There is no trimming or reconciling expedient.—You may chuſe either of the two; but no third is propoſed or allowed.

Ther. Was there not a different method for the *ancient* people of GOD?

Aſp. None, *Theron*. In the ſtate of primitive innocency, a *perfect* and *perſevering* obſervance of the divine command, was the condition of life and immortality. When, by the firſt grand apoſtaſy, this became

* If. liii. 11.

† *Rom.* iv. 4. *Pactional* debt; founded on the promiſe of the covenant, not ſpringing from any worth in the obedience.

came impoſſible; a *free* pardon, and *gracious* acceptance, through the bleſſed *JESUS*, were ſubſtituted in its ſtead. Which œconomy, like a fountain of life, was opened, when GOD promiſed *the ſeed of the woman, to bruiſe the ſerpent's head* *.—It ran, like a ſalutary rivulet, through the *antediluvian* world;—continued its progreſs along the *patriarchal* age;—flowed, in broader ſtreams, under the *Moſaic* diſpenſation;—is derived down to us, abundantly enlarged by the coming of *CHRIST*, and the miniſtry of his *apoſtles*;—will be tranſmitted, with an increaſing ſpread, to the lateſt poſterity;—nor ever ceaſe to amplify and extend its influence, till, as the fountain is become a river, the river is augmented into an ocean; and *the knowledge of the LORD* our righteouſneſs *fill the earth, as the waters cover the* abyſſes of the *ſea* †.

There was, I confeſs, a diverſity in the adminiſtration, but no difference in the nature, of the bleſſing. *JESUS CHRIST*, however variouſly manifeſted, was the *ſame yeſterday*, is the ſame *to-day*, will be the ſame *for ever* ‡. As it is the very ſame ſun, which *gleams* at early dawn, which *ſhines* in the advancing day, and *glows* at height of noon.

My ſimile reminds us of the time, and leaves a moſt important doctrine upon our memories. Suppoſe we take the admonition, and begin to move homeward.

Ther. We need be in no hurry, *Aſpaſio*. My watch tells me, that we have half an hour good. Beſides, I have ſomething farther to alledge, and from a very great authority, which ſeems directly contrary to your notion.

Aſp. Juſt as you pleaſe, *Theron*. If you chuſe to ſtay, I am all compliance with your inclination; and, would truth permit, I ſhould be all conformity to your opinion.

Ther. You know, who it is that aſks, *What doth the LORD*

* Gen. iii. 15. † If. xi. 9. ‡ Heb. xiii. 8.

LORD require of thee? And neither of us need be informed, what it is that the prophet replies; *Do juſtice, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy GOD* *. But I want to know, what *you think* of this paſſage?

Aſp. I think, it is abſolutely inconſiſtent with *your* ſcheme. This paſſage inculcates *humility*. But your ſcheme is the very reverſe of that amiable virtue. A ſelf-juſticiary walking humbly with GOD, is little better than a contradiction in terms.

The LORD has ſaid, "Ye ſhall be ſaved by grace †." Your ſyſtem replies, "No, but by our own works." —It is declared in ſcripture, "that the gift of GOD "is eternal life." It is implied in my friend's doctrine, that this happineſs is the wages of our own deeds.—"My SON ſhall have all the glory of a ſin-"ner's ſalvation," is the unalterable decree of the MOST HIGH. "*We* will have a ſhare in the ho-"nour," is the language of your opinion.—Look, how wide therefore the caſt is from the weſt! ſo remote is ſuch a ſtrain of teaching from the practice of walking humbly with our GOD.

Ther. But conſider, good *Aſpaſio;* have I not the prophet's authority for my opinion? Are not his words expreſſly on my ſide? Does he not mention thoſe duties of morality and piety, as the appointed method of obtaining the divine favour?

Aſp. He mentions, I apprehend, a ſolicitous *inquiry*. To which he gives a ſatisfactory *anſwer;* then ſubjoins a practical *improvement* of the whole.—The inquiry is expreſſed in theſe words; *Wherewithal ſhall I come before the LORD, and bow myſelf before the high GOD? Shall*

* Mic. vi. 8.

† *Eph.* ii. 5. This text lays the axe to the *very root* of ſpiritual pride, and all ſelf-glorying whatever. Therefore the inſpired writer, foreſeeing the backwardneſs of mankind to receive it, yet knowing the abſolute neceſſity of its reception, again aſſerts (*ver.* 8.) the very ſame truth, in the very ſame words.

Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams; with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul *?—To which it is replied, *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good* for this important purpose; namely, the *MESSIAH;* pointed out by all thy sacrifices, and described in the preceding chapter. Atonement for sin, and peace with GOD, are to be made by a better hand, and in a better way than thou proposest. HE, *whose outgoings have been from of old, from everlasting* †; He who is the SON of the HIGHEST, and yet the seed of *her that travaileth* †; HE has undertaken, and will fully execute, this great office.

And what doth the LORD thy GOD require of thee? What temper, what conduct, what expressions of gratitude, from his people? Who are reconciled through the blood of *CHRIST*, and admitted to the blessings of the new covenant ‖.—They are to testify their thankfulness, by the alacrity, uniformity, and constancy of their obedience; or by the conscientious discharge of every *moral*, *social*, and *religious* duty.

If this be a true interpretation of the text, instead of establishing, it overturns your cause.—But I have another objection to your method, perhaps, more weighty than the foregoing.

Ther. Pray let me hear it.—I am not so enamoured with my notions, but I can bear to have them censured;

* Mic. vi. 7. 8. † Mic. v. 2. ‡ Mic. v. 3.

‖ *Thy* GOD, is the phrase. Which denotes an interest; implies an appropriation; and is the peculiar language of the covenant.—Thy GOD; not made so by thy humble walking, but by an act of *his own* grace, previous to any obedience of thine.—According to *Theron*'s principles, the prophet should rather have said, Walk humbly (not *with thy* GOD, but) that he *may be* thy GOD.

sured; nor so attached to my scheme, but I can relinquish it for a better,

Asp. I would illustrate my meaning, by a common experiment in optics. When objects are viewed in a *concave speculum*, or in the hollow of a polished spoon, how do they appear?

Ther. Inverted.

Asp. Such is my friend's system of religion. He inverts the order of the gospel. He turns the beautiful building upside down; and lays that for the *foundation*, which should only be part of the *superstructure*.—Not so the apostle *Paul*. He, like a wise master-builder, places *CHRIST* as the foundation-stone; and rears his edifice of practical godliness on that all-supporting basis. Examine his epistle to the *Romans*; which is unquestionably the completest model of doctrine, and the noblest body of divinity, extant in the world.

He first discovers the *depravity* of our nature, and the misery of our condition.—He, then, displays the method of our *recovery* by *CHRIST*, and the blessings freely vouchsafed in his gospel.—After which, he delineates the offices of *morality*, and enforces them by the most engaging motives: motives, drawn from the free unbounded loving-kindness of GOD our SAVIOUR, and from the rich invaluable benefits of his grace *.

—Privilege

* This, I think, is the best platform for an *evangelical* catechism. The *ruin* of man, occasioned by sin—his *recovery*, effected by *CHRIST*—his *gratitude*, to be expressed by way of obedience.—This plan is carried into execution by the *Palatinate* divines; who have formed upon it, a summary of catechetical instruction, than which I have met with nothing of the kind, more clear and satisfactory; more edifying and animating; more exactly consonant to the benign spirit of the gospel, or better calculated to make mankind both holy and happy.—This piece the reader may see, together with a judicious, and very valuable exposition of it, in the *Latin* works of *Henricus Altingius*, one vol. Quarto. Which, I believe, may be bought for a trifle, yet are more precious than gold.

—Privilege he plants as the root: from which, duty blooms, as the flower; godlineſs grows, as the fruit.

The ſame order is obſerved by St *Peter*, in his very conciſe, but very accurate map, of the way to heaven: *Elect, according to the foreknowledge of GOD the FATHER, through ſanctification of the SPIRIT, unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of CHRIST* *.—Firſt, the everlaſting and electing love of the FATHER.—Then, the enlightening and renewing agency of the SPIRIT; who teſtifies of *CHRIST*, and applies his death to the ſoul, purifying the heart by faith.—From whence, as from a fountain of living water, flows true *ſanctification*, and every act of filial *obedience*, every ſpecies of real holineſs.—All which, being partly defective, and partly polluted, muſt be ſprinkled with the blood of *JESUS*, and made acceptable by his dying oblation.

Ther. Is this the conſtant method, in which the ſacred writers repreſent the goſpel-ſalvation? Do they always obſerve this particular order, in arranging its doctrines and its duties? Or, is it not an inſignificant circumſtance, which goes *firſt*, provided we take in *both*?

Aſp. To obſerve this order, I am perſuaded, is no inſignificant circumſtance. It is of great conſequence, both to our eſtabliſhment and to our growth in grace. Is it a matter of indifference to the archer, whether he ſend the point, or the feather of his arrow foremoſt? Can he, in either caſe, hit the mark with equal eaſe, and equal certainty?

I believe, you will find, that the ſacred writers, in all their *evangelical* diſcourſes, invariably adhere to this order. Nay, it took place even under the *legal* diſpenſation.—When the LORD GOD publiſhed his law from mount *Sinai*; when he wrote it, with his own finger, on tables of ſtone; how did he introduce the precepts? how enforce their obſervance?—

Let

* 1 Pet. i. 2.

Let us attend to the preamble; which is the language of love, and the very ſpirit of the goſpel: *I am the LORD thy GOD, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage* *. "I have already delivered thee with a mighty hand, from the "moſt ſordid and inſupportable ſlavery. I have promiſed thee, for thy poſſeſſion, the delightful country of *Canaan; a goodly heritage of the hoſts of nations* †. Nay, I *myſelf* am thy portion; a GOD in "covenant with thee; engaged, by an inviolable contract, and with the exertion of all my attributes, "to do thee good. *Therefore* keep the ſtatutes, the "judgments, and ordinances, which I am now going "to eſtabliſh."—Could there be a more winning inducement, or a more endearing obligation, to obedience?

I might point out the ſame ſtrain, running through the exhortations of *Moſes*, and the ſongs of *David;* the ſermons of the prophets, and the writings of the apoſtles. But this I wave, not through an apprehenſion of its difficulty, only from a fear of prolixity.—However, you will not think me tedious, if I produce one more inſtance, from the great maſter of our ſchools. *For we ourſelves were ſome time fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another* ‡. Here he ſets before us a diſmal, but exact picture, of our depraved and undone condition.—Then he preſents us with a delightful view of our redemption, both in its gracious cauſe, and precious effects. *But after that the kindneſs and love of GOD our SAVIOUR toward man appeared; not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the HOLY GHOST; which he hath ſhed on us abundantly,*

* Exod. xx. 2. † Jer. iii. 19.
‡ Tit. iii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

dantly thro' JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOUR; that, being juſtified by his grace, we ſhould be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.—Having thus provided for our happineſs, he then promotes our holineſs. *This is a faithful ſaying, and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they who have believed in GOD, might be careful to maintain good works: theſe things are good and profitable unto men.*

I make no comment * upon the paſſage; becauſe, I hope, you will commit it, as a noble depoſitum, to your memory. Your own diligent meditation, accompanied with humble prayer, will furniſh out the beſt expoſition.—Only I would juſt remark, that the apoſtle, always conſiſtent, always uniform, marſhals his thoughts with his uſual exactneſs. Good works are not *diſbanded;* nor yet ſuffered to lead the *van;* but made to bring up the *rear* †.—When he mentions theſe

* Perhaps, the reader will give me leave, tho' *Aſpaſio* has declined the office, to add a ſhort *expoſitory* ſtricture, upon the moſt diſtinguiſhed parts of this very important paragraph.—I. We have the *cauſe* of our redemption; *not works of righteouſneſs, which we have done*, but the *kindneſs*, the *love*, the *mercy* of GOD our SAVIOUR.—II. The *effects;* which are,—1. *Juſtification; being juſtified*, having our ſins forgiven, and *CHRIST's* righteouſneſs imputed: all this, without any the leaſt deſerving quality in us; ſolely *by his grace*, and moſt unmerited goodneſs.—2. *Sanctification;* expreſſed by *the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the HOLY GHOST:* whoſe influences purify the ſoul, as the waſhing of water cleanſes the body; and introduce an improvement into all the faculties of the mind, ſomewhat like that annual renovation and general ſmile of nature, which the return of ſpring diffuſes over the face of the earth.—III. The *end* and *conſummation* of all; that we ſhould be made *heirs* of the heavenly kingdom; and live, now in the aſſured hope, hereafter in the full enjoyment, of *eternal life.*

† The ſame order is obſerved by St *John*, Rev. xiv. 13. *Bleſſed are the dead which die in the LORD; for they reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them.* Not *go before*, to open the everlaſting doors, and give them admittance

these fruits of the SPIRIT, he mentions them, not slightly, as matters of small moment; but earnestly, as affairs of great importance. It is his desire, and his charge, that all believers should be *careful* *; have their hearts upon the business; should use their best contrivance, and exert their utmost endeavours,—not barely to practise, but to *maintain* †; to be exemplary, distinguished and pre-eminent in the exercise of every virtue.—Because this virtue, and those works, tho' not the ground of a reconciliation with GOD, are amiable in the eyes of all, and *honourable* ‡ to the Christian profession. They are also a necessary ingredient in personal happiness, and the apparent means of social *usefulness* ‖.

Ther. This view of the evangelical plan is, I must confess, new to me; and particularly your ordonnance of the epistle to the *Romans*.

Asp. If this be new, perhaps, what I am going to advance, may be strange.—We have been talking about acceptance with GOD; and debating, whether our own good works are the cause of this inestimable blessing. What will you say, if we can perform *no*

tance into the mansions of joy. But they *follow* them, when admitted. As the robe, which, on a king's coronation-day, flows from his shoulders, cannot but accompany him, whereso'ever he goes.—It may be pertinent, on the mention of this illustration, just to hint, that it is not the robe of state which *makes* the king; so neither is it the external practice of holiness which *makes* the Christian. An union with *CHRIST*, an interest in his merits, and the indwelling presence of his SPIRIT; *these*, and nothing short of these, constitute the true Christian. Yet, as the royal robe is an attendant on majesty, and distinguishes the monarch; so practical godliness is inseparable from faith, and adorns the believer.

* Προτιζωσι. This is somewhat like that emphatical expression, which so often occurs in the Old Testament, תשמרו לעשות *Ye shall observe to do*: ye shall be very *diligent* to fulfill; ye shall be very *exact* in performing.

† Προϊστασθαι. The reader may see this word more *critically* explained, *pag.* 190. in the note.

‡ Καλα. ‖ Ωφελιμα.

no good work, *till* we are interested in *CHRIST*, and accepted by GOD?

Ther. Say!—That this is razing foundations.

Asp. It is razing the wrong, the foundation falsely so called; which will certainly deceive as many as make it their trust.—And is it not *prudent*, when we are building for eternity, carefully to examine the ground? Is it not *friendly*, to divert a man from the treacherous sand, and lead him to the unshaken rock?—For this cause I said it once, and for this cause I say it again, That we can perform *no* good work *till* we are interested in *CHRIST*, and accepted of GOD.

Ther. Produce your reasons, *Aspasio*. And strong reasons they must be, which are forcible enough to support such an opinion.

Asp. The case seems to speak for itself. How *can* a man that is evil, do works that are good? Would you expect to *gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*—But let us hear what our *unerring* TEACHER says: *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me* *. Nothing can be more express and full to our purpose. But that which follows, is far more awful and alarming to our consciences. *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned* †.—From which it appears, that the human heart is never actuated by *good tempers*, that the human life can never be productive of *good works*, until a man is ingrafted into *CHRIST*. No more than a branch can bear valuable fruit, while it continues in a state of separation from the tree ‡.—It appears also, that persons alienated from *CHRIST*, are,

* John xv. 4. † John xv. 6.

‡ This discovers an error, which is often committed, in our attempts to instruct little children. What is more common, than to tell them! "If they will be good, GOD "almighty will love and bless them."—Whereas they should rather be informed, "that they are sinners; but that GOD

are, and all their performances too, like *broken, withered, rotten* boughs; fit for nothing, but to be committed to the flames, and consumed from the earth. Both they and their services, far from being meritorious, are, in the estimate of heaven, worthless nd despicably mean.

Ther. What! Are all the noble deeds, performed by the advocates for morality, and lovers of virtue, worthless in themselves, and despicable before the SUPREME BEING? Worthless and despicable (grating words!) *only* because they are not attended with the peculiarities of your faith? Can the want of this *little* circumstance change their nature, and turn their gold into dross?

Asp. My dear *Theron*, call not the circumstance little. It is sufficient, were your works more precious than gold, to debase them into tin, into lead, into dross.—When the poor shepherd brought you, yesterday morning, a present of some wood-strawberries; bringing them, as an humble expression of his *gratitude*, they were kindly received. But if he had offered them, as a *price* for your house, or as the *purchase* of your estate; how should you have regarded them in such a connection? No words can express the disdain you would have conceived.—When *Barnabas* presented a sum of money to the apostles, for the supply of their necessities, and the relief of indigent believers *; it was welcome to them, and pleasing to their GOD. But, when *Simon* the sorcerer offered his gold to *Peter* and *John;* offering it, not from a principle of faith, but as an equivalent for the HOLY SPIRIT; not in order to testify his thankfulness, but rather to play the huckster with heaven; it was rejected with the utmost indignation †.

I leave

"almighty has given his SON to die for sinners; and, if they "pray to him, he will forgive their sins, will make them ho-"ly, make them happy, and bless them with all spiritual bless-"sings in *CHRIST.*"

* Acts iv. 37. † Acts viii. 20.

I leave my friend to apply the preceding instances. Only let me beg of him to believe, that, if my words are *grating*, they are extorted by the force of truth. If I am obliged to blame what he calls good works; it is, as a great critic blames eloquence, "with the tenderness of a lover."—But my censure falls only on their faulty *origin*, and unbecoming *aim*. Let them spring from the grace of *CHRIST*, as their source; let them propose the glory of *CHRIST*, as their end; then, instead of putting a slight upon them, or giving them a bill of divorce, I would court, caress, and wed them.—Whereas, if neither *this* end be kept in the view, nor *that* principle operate in the heart; I must persist, in questioning the genuineness of their character; nay, in denying the very possibility of their existence. There may be a *mimickry* of holy actions. But it is mimickry only: as empty, as the combs * made by those wasps; and no better than a flame that is painted.

I have an authority for this doctrine, which I think you will not offer to controvert.

Ther. What authority?

Asp. That of our church; who declares, in her XIIIth article; "Works done before the grace of "*CHRIST*, and inspiration of his SPIRIT, are "not pleasing to GOD; forasmuch as they spring "not out of faith in *CHRIST*."—Faith in *JESUS CHRIST* purifies the heart. Till this be done, we have neither disposition nor capacity for holy obedience. Nay, without faith in *CHRIST*, our persons are abominable †; our state is damnable; and how can any of our works be acceptable?

Such a one, you say, is honest in his dealings, temperate

* *Faciunt et vespæ favos.*

† *To the defiled and unbelieving is nothing clean*, Tit. i. 15. The apostle joins *defiled* and *unbelieving*, to intimate, that without a true belief nothing is clean. The understanding and the conscience are polluted. Both the man and his doings are impure.

perate in his enjoyments, charitable to the poor. I allow it all. But, unleſs theſe ſeeming virtues are referred to the *glory* of the ſupreme JEHOVAH; unleſs they flow from *faith* in the crucified *JESUS;* they may be acts of worldly policy, of ſelfiſh prudence, or *Phariſaical* pride. They are by no means a pleaſing oblation to the LORD almighty *.—Nay, inſtead of being acts of duty, and objects of approbation, they ſtand condemned in the ſcripture, and are breaches of the commandment. They ſtand condemned in that ſcripture, which declares, *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe GOD* †. They are breaches of that commandment, which requires, *Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of GOD* ‡.

Upon the whole; if we will ſubmit to the determination of our eſtabliſhed church, or acquieſce in the deciſion of our divine MASTER; we muſt acknowledge, that there is no ſuch thing as a good work, till we are reconciled to GOD, and our perſons accepted in his ſight.—Therefore to repreſent our own works as the means of reconciliation and acceptance, is both chimerical and abſurd; *Chimerical*, becauſe it builds

* Might not this obſervation be made, with great propriety, in our *infirmary* and other *charitable* ſermons? Should not the audience be exhorted to abound in acts of benevolence, from a *grateful regard* to the infinitely merciful and condeſcending *JESUS?* 2 Cor. viii. 9.—Should they not, before all things, be directed to *make ſure* their intereſt in the REDEEMER's merits? that their perſons may find favour, and their alms acceptance, *Eph.* i. 6.—Should they not be admoniſhed, that without this *believing application* to *CHRIST*, whatever they do, whatever they give, is worthleſs in the eye of their MAKER, and will be fruitleſs to their own ſouls. *Heb.* xi. 6.—In this reſpect our SAVIOUR was eminently typified by the *Jewiſh* altar: on which *every* ſacrifice, by whomſoever brought, was to be offered, and ſeparate from which *no* ſacrifice, however coſtly, could be accepted, *Exod.* xx. 24. *Levit.* xvii. 3, 4.

† Heb. xi. 6. ‡ 1 Cor. x. 32.

builds upon a phantom, and takes for a reality, what has no existence. *Absurd*, because it inverts the natural order of things, and would make the effect antecedent to the cause.

Ther. Before we quit this agreeable retreat, let me ask my *Aspasio*, What he proposes, by running down all those works, which are the produce of inward religion, and essential to true holiness; whose excellency is displayed in the *clearest*, and whose necessity is urged in the *strongest* terms, throughout the whole Bible?

Asp. I am far from running down works, which are the produce of inward religion; and therefore may be justly styled, *works of faith and labours of love* *. —But I would caution my *Theron* and myself to take care, that our works be accompanied with those circumstances, which alone can render them *truly* good. Let them arise from *faith*, and bear witness to *love*; or else we shall have *thistles instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley* †.

I would also persuade my friend, and I would habituate myself, not to repose our *confidence* in any works whatsoever; lest they prove a bruised reed, that breaks under our weight; or a pointed spear, that pierces us to the heart.—We shall never be like the church, *who comes up out of the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved* ‡, so

* *Works of faith, and labours of love*, 1 Thess. i. 3. How finely are good works characterized in this place! though it be only *en passant*, transiently, or by the by. And how judiciously are the *true* distinguished from the *counterfeit!* Works which are done in faith, works which proceed from love; these and these only, the apostle signifie, are *really* good.—As some noble river, though pressing forward to the ocean, nourishes many a fair plant; and suckles many a sweet flower by the way; so the sacred writers, though principally intent (as here) upon some different point, yet drop *incidentally* such valuable truths, as chear the believer's heart, and make glad the city of our GOD.

† Job xxxi. 40. ‡ Cant. viii. 5.

so long as we bolster up ourselves with a conceit of personal righteousness. This was the error, the fatal error of the *Pharisees*; this the film which blinded the eyes of their mind, and sealed them up under the darkness of final unbelief.

Besides, my dear *Theron*, if you expect to be saved by your own duties, you will be loath to see the worst of your condition. To see the worst of your condition, will be a dagger to your hopes, and as death to your soul. You will therefore be inclined to *daub with untempered mortar* *. Instead of acknowledging the deep depravity of your nature, and the numberless iniquities of your life, you will invent a thousand excuses to palliate your guilt; and, by this means, erect a *wall* of *partition* between your soul and the merits of your REDEEMER: which will be a greater inconvenience, a more destructive evil, than to cut off all supply of provision from an army, or even to intercept the sun-beams from visiting the earth.

Ther. Now you talk of armies, I must observe, that, though I have scarce been able to keep my ground, in this argumentative action, I cannot allow you the honour of a victory; as a *retreat* is very different from a *rout*.

Asp. I would also remark, that my friend has changed the intended plan of our operations; has almost continually acted upon the *offensive*. While my part has been only to sustain the shock. At our next encounter, you may expect to have the order of battle reversed. I shall direct my forces to begin the charge. Put yourself therefore in readiness for a *brisk attack*.

Ther. You act the fair enemy, *Aspasio*, I must confess, in thus giving the alarm, before you make the assault.

Asp. This hostility may appear *fairer still*, when I assure you, that my weapons aim not at the destruction of your comfort, or the demolition of any valuable interest. Only they would be *mighty through GOD*, to

* Ezek. xiii. 10.

to pull down the ſtrong-holds of unbelief; and *bring every* ſelf-exalting, every rebellious *thought captive unto CHRIST* *; captive, in a profeſſed ſubmiſſion to his righteouſneſs, as well as a dutiful ſubjection to his commands.—And, when *ſuch* is the tendency of the campaign, it will be your greateſt advantage, to loſe the victory. It will be better than a triumph, to acknowledge yourſelf vanquiſhed.

* 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

DIALOGUE VIII.

Ther. OUR laſt converſation ended with a *challenge*. To decline or delay the acceptance of it, would look like cowardice in me, and be a piece of injuſtice to you, *Aſpaſio*. Therefore I am now ready to give you all the ſatisfaction, which a gentleman can demand.—Only, as the weather continues hazy, I believe, my *ſtudy* muſt be the place of action.

Aſp. A challenge! *Theron*—

Ther. What, Sir! do you boggle? would you eat your words, and play the poltroon?

Aſp. Perhaps, I may have an inclination to follow the example of a *brother-hero*, who ran away from the field of battle, juſt as his comrades were advancing to charge the enemy; and when called to an account for his behaviour, right worthily alledged, that his retreat proceeded, not from any timidity of mind; no, but from a concern for the public good. "For," quoth he, "if I had been knocked on the head to-"day, how ſhould I have been able to fight for my "country to-morrow?"

You ſmile, *Theron*, at my doughty warrior, and his ſage maxim.—But, ſince you have glanced at a certain *modiſh* cuſtom, give me leave very ſeriouſly to aſſure you, that, if the affair was to be determined by ſword and

and piſtol, I ſhould reckon ſuch a conduct, a reſolute refuſal at leaſt, not at all unmanly, but the *truly* wiſe and gallant behaviour.—For ſurely it can never be an inſtance of wiſdom, to hazard my life, at the mere caprice of a turbulent ruffian, who is a ſtranger, to all the principles of humanity and generoſity, but a ſlave, an abandoned ſlave, to his own ungovernable paſſions. Surely it can never be an act of real bravery, to expoſe *my* perſon; becauſe ſome fool-hardy practitioner in the fencing-ſchool, is deſperate enough to riſk *his*.—The gentleman, the true gentleman, ſhould exert a becoming dignity of ſpirit; and ſcorn to ſet his welfare on a level, with that of an inconſiderate and barbarous bully *.

Ther. But honour, my *Aſpaſio*, honour is at ſtake. Better to loſe our life, than forfeit our reputation. Better to be in a grave, than to be the jeſt of every coffeehouſe; and perhaps pointed at, as we paſs the ſtreets, for mean-ſpirited, ſneaking, or, as the gentlemen of the ſword ſo *elegantly* ſpeak, white-livered animals.

Aſp. Forfeit our reputation! Amongſt whom, I beſeech you?—A few raſh and precipitate creatures; the pupils of *La Mancha*'s knight; the ſons of *Chimera* † and cruelty: whoſe applauſe is infamy; and their detraction

* *Aſpaſio* calls the perſon who gives the challenge, a *bully*. And ſuch, notwithſtanding all the maxims of fantaſtical and falſe honour, he will certainly be found, when tried at the bar of reaſon or juſtice. For, if the moſt impetuous, irrational, and brutal barbarity is allowed to conſtitute a bully, *he* has an indiſputable title to the character, who, on account of a mere punctilio, or ſome ſlight affront, would deſtroy a life, that might be of ſervice to *ſociety*,—might be a bleſſing to various *relatives*,—and is intimately connected with a bliſsful or miſerable *immortality*.

† This kind of gentry are ſtyled—in a Book, with which they have little or no acquaintance; but whoſe maxims will be had in reverence, when their names are loſt in oblivion—רשו *the ſons of bluſter*, or *the children of noiſe*, Jer. xlviii. 45.

traction the higheſt praiſe they can beſtow.—From every judicious and worthy perſon, your conduct will be ſure to gain approbation, and your character eſteem. When *Cæſar* received a challange from *Anthony*, to engage him in ſingle combat, he very calmly anſwered the bearer of the meſſage; *If* Anthony *is weary of life*, tell him *there are other ways to death, beſides the point of my ſword.*—Who ever deemed this an inſtance of cowardice? All ages have admired it, as the act of a *diſcreet* and *gallant* man; who was ſenſible of his own importance, and knew how to treat the petulant and revengeful humour of a diſcontented adverſary with its deſerved contempt.

Barely to loſe our life, is the ſmalleſt of thoſe evils which attend this miſchievous practice.—It is pregnant with a long, an almoſt endleſs train of diſaſtrous conſequences to parents, wives, children, friends, aſſociates; and the community.—It is an *infallible* expedient, to be deprived of the favour of the infinite GOD, and to be excluded from the joys of his eternal kingdom.—It is the *ſure* way to become an object of abhorrence to the angels of light; and be made the laughing-ſtock of devils, in their dungeons of darkneſs *, *Shame*, everlaſting ſhame, *ſhall be* the reward of ſuch gallantry, *the promotion of* ſuch *fools* †.

Ther.

* "Let me tell you with confidence," (ſays an excellent perſon, addreſſing himſelf to one of theſe unhappy *deſperados*,) "that all duels, or ſingle combats, are murderous; blanch "them over (how you liſt) with names of honour, and ho-"neſt pretences, their uſe is ſinful, and their nature deviliſh." See the ſelect works of Biſhop *Hall*, in one volume fol. pag. 526. Where the reader will find a happy mixture of true *oratory*, and ſound *divinity*; a rich vein of *fancy*, and a ſweet ſpirit of *piety*; contemplations upon the hiſtories of ſcripture (which, I think, are our prelate's maſterpiece) almoſt as *entertaining* and *inſtructive*, as the ſubjects illuſtrated are important and wonderful. Notwithſtanding a few ſtiff or antique phraſes, I cannot but eſteem the works of this author, among the moſt valuable compoſitions extant in our language.

† Prov. iii. 35.

Ther. With regard to this point, I am entirely of your opinion, *Aspasio*, however I may differ in other particulars.

Asp Say you so *Theron!* Would *you* then tamely submit to affronts, insults, and injuries?

Ther. As to the trifling affronts of a peevish incontinent tongue, I would treat them with a superior scorn. And when thus treated, they are sure to recoil, with the keenest edge, and severest weight, upon the impotent malice which offers them. The wretch should see, that I could pity his misery, and smile at his folly.—But as to *injuries*, the case is otherwise. Should any one assault my person, 'tis at his peril. He would find, and perhaps to his smart,

Et nos tela manu, ferrumque haud debile dextra
Spargimus, et nostro sequitur de vulnere sanguis *.

Here, the fundamental and everlasting law of *self-preservation* calls upon us to play the man. And I am sure, *Christianity* does not require us, to yield our throats to the knife, or open our breasts to the dagger.

But to retire,—to deliberate,—to sit down,—and indite a *formal* challenge,—seems to me altogether as savage and iniquitous, as to assault on the highway.—He that demands my money on the road, or extorts it by an incendiary letter, or decoys me into the snare by a forged and counterfeit note, is stigmatized for a villain; is abhorred by every person of integrity; and, when detected, is rewarded with a halter. Why should we reckon the headstrong bravo *less injurious?* who makes his attempt upon my very life; and thirsts, with insatiable fury, for my blood?

Asp. He allows you a fair *chance*, it is said.

Ther. A chance! Of what?—Either of falling a sacrifice to his rage, or of imbruing my hands in his blood. Which is neither more nor less, than reducing me to a necessity of launching into damnation myself, or

* VIRG.

or of transmitting a fellow-creature to eternal vengeance.—And is *this* an extenuation? *this* a mitigating circumstance? It really proves the practice so inexcusably wicked, that nothing can be pleaded in its defence. The very argument, used to justify the horrid deed, inflames its guilt, and aggravates its malignity.

'Tis pity, but the legislative authority would interpose, for the suppression of such a flagrant wrong to society, and such a notorious violation of our benign religion. Why should not the laws declare it *felony*, to make the first overture for a duel? Since it is always more hainous, and frequently more pernicious; is always murder in the intention, and frequently issues in *double* destruction; the one inflicted by the stab of violence, the other executed by the sword of justice.

Might it not, at least, be branded with some mark of public infamy, or subjected to a severe *pecuniary mulct?* so that a Gentleman of spirit and temper might have it in his power, to return the compliment of a challenging letter with some such answer:

S I R,

"However meanly you may think of your life, I "set too high a value upon mine, to expose it as a "mark for *undisciplined* and *outrageous* passions.— "Neither have I so totally renounced all that is hu"mane, benevolent, or amiable, as to draw my sword "for your destruction, because you have first been o"vercome by *precipitate* and *unreasonable* resentment. "—You have given me an opportunity of acting the "Gentleman and the Christian. And this challenge I "accept, as a note under your hand for five hundred "pounds *; which will very soon be demanded, ac"cording to law, by,

S I R,

Yours, &c."

Asp.

* Might not the refuser of a challenge be dignified with

Asp. But to resume the proper subject—the nature of *our* engagement: which I now recollect, and which was explained, when I ventured to give, what you call the challenge.—As it is not my *Theron*, but the obstacles of his faith, and the enemies of his felicity, that I am to encounter, perhaps I shall have courage to stand my ground. And, instead of *violating* all the obligations of equity, honour, and conscience, I shall certainly evidence my love to my friend; may possibly promote his truest good.

Ther. I don't see, how this can be effected by your late attempt. You undertook to *run down* all works of righteousness, as absolutely unable to find acceptance with GOD, and equally insufficient to recommend us to his favour. It is for the credit of these, which *Aspasio* has depretiated, that I enter the lists.

Asp. Pray, what is the standard, to which these works of righteousness must be conformed, and by which their sufficiency may be determined?

Ther. The *moral law*, doubtless: I know no other standard of righteousness, nor any other way of becoming righteous.

Asp. You will, I hope, ere long be acquainted with another way.—At present, I agree to your proposal. We will join issue on this footing; and try the merits of our cause, before *this tribunal*. Yourself shall be the

some honorary distinction, resembling the *civic crown* amongst the ancient *Romans?* Since, by his cool and temperate bravery, he saves one life from the sword, another from the halter.—Was some honorary distinction, on the one hand, united to a pecuniary forfeiture on the other, I cannot but think, they would prove an effectual method to *check* the *progress* of this destructive evil. It would break the teeth of malice with her own weapons, and turn the artillery of revenge upon herself. Those detestable passions would be loath to indulge themselves in this horrid manner, if it was made the sure way to *ennoble* and *enrich* the object of their rage.—*N. B.* The *civic crown* was an ornament assigned to those soldiers, who had in battle rescued a fellow-citizen from impending death.

the judge. I will only ask your opinion, and refer myself to your decision.—You see, I am soon weary of the military style. I had obtruded myself on a part which I was not qualified to act; and now resume a more becoming character.

Ther. If you place me on the bench, I shall allow of no such digressions; but shall keep you close to the subject.

Asp. Has your Lordship then considered the nature of the divine law, and the extent of its obligations?

Ther. It obliges *all* persons, and comprizes the *whole* duty of man. It forbids all immorality, and injoins every virtue.—Are not these your sentiments?

Asp. They are, when somewhat enlarged.—The empire of the law, as *prohibitory* of evil, extends both to the outward and inward man. It takes cognizance of the actions. It judges every word. All the operations, and all the dispositions of the soul, come under its sacred jurisdiction.—It is indeed a discerner, not only of the working thoughts, but also of the dawning intentions; and arraigns them both at its awful bar. *It pierces even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit* *. Not the inmost recesses of the breast are too deep for its penetration; nor all the artifices of the deceitful heart too subtile for its detection.—Other laws forbid the unclean act; *this* condemns the wanton eye, and irregular desire. Other laws punish the injurious deed; *this* passes sentence on the unguarded sallies of passion, and the most secret emotions of resentment. So eminently true is that remark of the *Psalmist*, *Thy commandments are exceeding broad* †.—Tell me now, *Theron*, has your obedience been commensurate to this extensive platform of duty?

Ther. If the law be so *very extensive*—

Asp. Nay, my friend, you cannot suspect, that I have stretched, to an undue extent, the obligations of the divine law. Since this interpretation is established by

* Heb. iv. 12. † Psal. cxix. 96.

by an authority *too great* to be controverted; *too clear* to be misunderstood; even by the authority of *CHRIST* himself: whose sermon upon the mount is a professed exposition of the commandments, and maintains, in the most explicit manner, all that I have advanced.—So that, if our LORD's exposition is just, I think, it will be neither rash, nor uncharitable to say, There is not a man upon earth, but has broke them *all*.

Ther. Are we all idolaters then? all adulterers? all murderers? Shocking to imagine!

Asp. It is shocking, I confess.—But how much more so, if *such* delinquents expect justification by their own deeds?

Ther. This is no proof of your assertion, my good friend.

Asp. To be fond of gold; to be enamoured with the world; to love any creature more than the ever-blessed CREATOR; are instances of idolatry *, not quite so gross, but altogether as real, as to set up idols in our temples, or pay acts of adoration to senseless images. Have you always been free from this *apostasy* of the *affections*?

Our infallible TEACHER has informed us, that unreasonable anger, contemptuous language, and malevolent wishes †, are each a species of murder, and not many removes from the assassin's deadly stab. Have you been always meek, always benevolent, and never chargeable with this *mental homicide*?

We are farther assured, that the indulgence of inordinate desire is, in the impartial estimate of heaven, as the commission of the impure deed ‡. And evil concupiscence of every kind violates that sacred precept, *Thou shalt not covet* ||. Has your will been invariably

* Col. iii. 5. Phil. iii. 19. † Matth. v. 22. ‡ Matth. v. 28.

|| *Rom.* vii. 7. *Aspasio*'s observation brings to my remembrance a *remarkable incident*; which, as it is quite pertinent to our purpose, the reader will allow me to relate. It passed between a friend of mine, and a certain ingenious stranger, in-

to

riably upright, and warped with no irregular inclination? Are you wholly unpolluted with this *adultery* of the *heart?*

I wait not for a reply. I have often heard you *plead guilty* to all,—yes, to all and every of these charges respectively.

Ther. Where, and when, *Aspasio?*

Asp. In the most sacred place, and on the most solemn occasion. And not you only, but a whole multitude of

to whose company he happened to fall.—The gentleman was extolling, at an extravagant rate, the virtue of *honesty;* what a dignity it imparted to our nature! how it recommended us to the Supreme BEING! he confirmed all by a celebrated line from Mr *Pope*,

An honest man's the noblest work of GOD.

Sir, replied my friend, however excellent the virtue of honesty may be, I fear, there are very few men in the world, that really possess it.—You surprise me! said the stranger.—Ignorant as I am of your character, Sir, I fancy, it would be no difficult matter, to prove even *you* a dishonest man.—I defy you.—Will you give me leave, then, to ask you a question or two; and promise not to be offended?—Ask your questions, and welcome.—Have you never met with an opportunity of getting gain by some *unfair* means?—The gentleman paused.—I don't ask, whether you made *use of*, but whether you have *met* with, such opportunity? I, for my part, have, and, I believe, every body else has.—Very probably I may.—How did you feel your mind affected, on such an occasion? Had you *no* secret desire, not the *least* inclination, to seize the advantage which offered? Tell me, without any evasion, and consistently with the character you admire?—I must acknowledge, I have not always been absolutely free from every irregular *inclination*, but—Hold, Sir; none of your salvos. You have confessed enough. If you had the desire, though you never proceeded to the action, this shews you was dishonest in *heart*. This is what the scripture calls *concupiscence*. It defiles the soul. It is a breach of that law, which requireth *truth in the inner parts;* and, unless you are pardoned through the blood of *CHRIST*, will be a just ground of your condemnation, *when GOD shall judge the secrets of men.*

of self-condemned criminals.—Our church, you know, has ingrafted the decalogue into her public service; and taught all her members to answer, after the repetition of each commandment; *LORD, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.* Is there any sense in these words? or have we any meaning, when we utter them? If we have, surely they must imply an acknowledgment of disobedience in *every* particular.—The criminal arraigned at the bar, never falls on his knees and craves forgiveness, till he either confesses or is convicted. This then must be the purport of our response. "We are verily guilty concerning "this thing. And we humbly implore, both pardon- "ing mercy for the past, and strengthening grace for "the future."

Give me leave to urge my question a little farther.—Is there a *single day*, in which you have not transgressed, some way or other, this sacred rule?

Ther. If the law of GOD will dispense with no deviation, not even in the first starts of thought, or the least wanderings of desire:—But surely to affirm this, is to extend the law beyond all reasonable bounds. The motions of evil desire, *if indulged*, are undoubtedly criminal. But are they also, *when restrained*, breaches of duty? I should rather imagine, that such temptations are thrown in our way, for the trial of our obedience: which, had they no power over our affections, would not be trials; and when they are resolutely withstood, cannot be faults.

Asp. What was the judgment of our reformers? and what is the voice of our church? We may find both in the ninth article. "Although there is no con- "demnation for them that believe and are baptized, "yet the apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and "lust hath of itself the nature of sin." It is not said, concupiscence hath *then only* the nature of sin, when it is ripened into action; but *of itself*, and before it breaks out into the commission of iniquity. *Of itself*

it

it is contrary to the pure nature, and therefore cannot but be condemned by the perfect law of GOD.

Ther. This I can truly plead in my own behalf, that it has not been customary with me to offend; at least, not *presumptuously*, or of deliberate wickedness.

Asp. My dear *Theron*, do not offer to *palliate* your guilt. Such an opiate may stupefy, but will not cure; or rather, like opiates ill prepared, it will intoxicate the mind, and counteract the operation of every healing medicine.—Besides, it is not only pernicious, but false and unreasonable. You know the use of that *solar microscope*, and are able to inform me of its effects.

Ther. I ought to be pretty well acquainted with these experiments; since it has long been my favourite diversion, to employ a few spare hours in such agreeable speculations.

Asp. You have seen the body of an insect, accommodated to the surprising instrument. When, in this situation, the animal was pricked by a very fine needle; your eye, your naked eye, just perceived the *puncture;* and discovered, perhaps, a *speck* of moisture oozing from the orifice. But in what manner were they represented by the magnifying instrument?

Ther. The puncture was widened into a frightful *gash*. The speck of moisture swelled into a copious stream; and flowed, like a *torrent*, from the gaping wound. An ox, under the sacrificing knife, scarce looks more bulky, or bleeds more largely.

Asp. Don't you apprehend my design?—If *we*, short-sighted mortals, and almost blinded with self-love; if *we* cannot but be sensible of our faults; how flagrant must they appear, in what enormous magnitudes, and with what aggravating circumstances, to an eye perfectly pure, and infinitely penetrating?

Instead of attempting to extenuate our offences, let us make some such improving reflections.—"If this "holy law, which prohibits the minutest failure, form "the indictment; if this all-discerning GOD, who

"sifts our conduct even to the smallest defect, be the "judge; if our personal goodness, which abounds "with imperfections, be our plea; what can we expect "at that decisive hour, when the LORD shall *lay* "*judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plum-* "*met* *?—Surely, this consideration should incline "us to adopt the wise and ardent wish of the apostle; "*That we may* now, in this our day, *win CHRIST*, "*and*, at the last tremendous audit, *be found in him;* "*not having our own righteousness which is of the* "*law*, for the foundation of our hopes, *but the righ-* "*teousness which is of GOD by faith in JESUS* "*CHRIST*†."

Consider the law in its nobler capacity, as *injoining* whatever is excellent.—Can you hope, *Theron*, to be justified by it, if you fall short of its demands, not barely in a few instances, but in *every* action of your life, and *every* temper of your heart?

Ther. Such a hope, cherished amidst such circumstances, would be fallacious and absurd.—But I trust, I am not so very faulty, or rather so entirely abandoned, as your interrogatory supposes.

Asp. Have you duly weighed the *perfection* and *spirituality* of the divine law?—It is a transcript of the unspotted purity, and absolute rectitude of the divine nature. It requires an unreserved obedience to all GOD's commands, and a most unfeigned submission to all his dispensations; without regretting the former, as a grievous yoke; or repining at the latter, as rigorous treatment.—It calls not only for external duty, but also for the most upright imaginations, and devout affections.—Nay, it insists upon the exercise of *every* virtue, and that in the *highest* degree: love to GOD, without the least lukewarmness; and love to all our neighbours without any unkindness; a sanctity of desire, that knows no stain; and an humility of mind, that is free from all elatement. In a word, it requires us

* Is. xxviii. 17. † Phil. iii. 8, 9.

us to be perfect, *even as our FATHER which is in heaven is perfect* *.

Do any of your actions come up to this exalted ſtandard? Are any of your graces thus refined?

Ther. Am I then abſolutely *an inſolvent* before the great LORD of the univerſe? Have I no lamb in my fold without a blemiſh? nothing in my life, nothing in my heart, but what is defective and defiled?

Aſp. Indeed, my friend, this is not *your* condition alone, but the condition of the moſt irreproachable perſon on earth. There is *none* perfect, in any character, or in any work, no not one. None that obeys the divine law, uniformly, invariably, and completely.

Caſt your eye upon the names which are ſubjoined to thoſe beautiful *prints*. How elegant is the engraving! How accurate are the letters! The ſtrokes moſt delicately fine! Their ſhape moſt exactly true!—Let me aſk you to tranſcribe them with your pen; and make the copy equal to the original. Preſerve all the noble boldneſs of the *Roman* ſtamp, and all the graceful ſoftneſs of the *Italian* touch.—What? could you not execute this taſk, even in your preſent unimpaired health, and with the exertion of all your ſkill? How ſhamefully then muſt you fall ſhort, if your eyes were *dim* with age; if your hands ſhook with a *paralytic* diſ-

* *Matth.* v. 48. Our LORD, having explained ſeveral commandments of the law, ſums up the whole, and gives us the ſpirit of them all, in this moſt refined precept; *Be ye perfect, even*, &c. If the reader pleaſes to take this paſſage into conſideration, he will have a more ſatisfactory anſwer to *Theron*'s objection, concerning the *firſt motions* of evil deſire; more ſatisfactory, I mean, than was ſuggeſted in the preceding pages. There the reply turned upon human teſtimony; here it reſts upon divine authority.

I hope, the candid reader will, on other occaſions, remember this obſervation. And if, at any time, the ſtrongeſt reaſons are not aſſigned, let him ſuppoſe it probable, that they are omitted in one place, only to be introduced and urged, perhaps with greater advantage, in another.

order ; and your underſtandiug was oppreſſed with a *lethargic* dulneſs ?—Such is really the caſe with regard to all the children of men. Our nature is depraved; our moral abilities are enervated ; and our intellectual faculties clouded. And can we, in ſuch a ſtate of impotence, tranſcribe that ſacred ſyſtem, which is the very image of GOD,—tranſcribe it into our tempers, and render it legible in our lives, without diminiſhing one jot or tittle of its perfect purity.

Ther. Though I fall ſhort, there are Chriſtians of a much higher claſs : Chriſtians I don't doubt, who have theſe laws written on their hearts ; all whoſe tempers are caſt into this heavenly mould. Nor am I myſelf without hopes of making *more conſiderable* advances in holineſs.

Aſp. May your hopes be quickened into vigorous endeavours ? and your endeavours be crowned with abundant ſucceſs ! What you ſuppoſe concerning very eminent Chriſtians, I cannot wholly admit, neither do I wholly deny. They may have all their tempers caſt into the heavenly mould : but then they are conformed to the ſacred pattern, only *in part*. There is a reſemblance ; yet not ſuch as that clear and ſteady mirror (pointing to a fine glaſs over the chimney-piece) exhibits ; but ſuch as ſome turbulent and muddy ſtream reflects.—If the breaſts of theſe eminent Chriſtians were formed on the model of *Druſus*'s* houſe, I verily think, you would have a lower opinion of their acquiſitions in virtue.

David, whom GOD himſelf dignifies with the moſt exalted of all characters, and *ſtyles a man after his own heart*,

* When *Druſus*, a noble *Roman*, was deliberating upon a model for his new houſe, the architect offered to build it in ſuch a taſte, that no eye ſhould overlook any of his rooms.—" You quite miſtake my inclination," ſaid *Druſus*. " I am " for the very reverſe of your plan. I would have my houſe " ſo contrived, that every paſſenger may ſee whatever is " tranſacted within."

heart *; who, to a moſt inflamed love, added a moſt accurate knowledge of the divine teſtimonies; was deeply ſenſible of the truth I would inculcate. After an attentive contemplation of the ſublimity, the extent, the ſanctity of thoſe heavenly inſtitutes, he breaks out into this humbling exclamation; *Who can tell how oft he offendeth* †? "Was the moſt vigi-"lant conduct, or the moſt purified ſoul, examined by "this conſummate rule; innumerable would be found "the ſlips of the former, and glaring would the fai-"lures of the latter appear."

Ther. I cannot ſee the reaſon for *degrading* human nature to ſuch an extravagant degree, and ranking human works among the refuſe of things.

Aſp. Do you aſk the reaſon of this remonſtrance? —It is to preſerve us from the miſchievous error of the *Phariſee;* who, meaſuring himſelf, not by the *true*, *ſublime*, and *extenſive* ſenſe of the law, but by a falſe, debaſed, and mutilated interpretation, became haughty in his own conceit, and abominable in the ſight of GOD. —Hear him trumpeting his own praiſe; *I am no extortioner no adulterer* ‡. This, the poor vain creature fancied, was a ſufficient obedience paid to the *ſecond* table. See him ſtill ſtrutting in his own imaginary plumes ‖; *I faſt twice in the week; I give*

* For the propriety of this character, and its correſpondence with the perſon, let me refer the reader to a *Note* in *Dialogue* I. *p.* 42.

† Pſal. xix. 12. ‡ Luke xviii. 11.

‖ This ſeems to give the genuine ſignification of το υψηλον εν ανθρωποις, Luke xvi. 15. Not *that which is highly eſteemed*, ενδοξον, ενδοξον. The propoſition, taken in this ſenſe, is neither neceſſarily nor univerſally true. The meekneſs of *Moſes*, the fortitude of *Joſhua*, the wiſdom of *Solomon*, were highly eſteemed among thoſe very men, to whom our LORD addreſſed his diſcourſe. Yet none can ſuppoſe, that the endowments of thoſe illuſtrious perſonages were *an abomination in the ſight of GOD.*

Whereas, whatever is *high and lifted up*, haughty and conceited; every ſentiment of ſelf-admiration, and all the fruits which

I give tythes of all that I poſſeſs *. This, he fooliſhly dreamed, was a due compliance with the demands of the *firſt* table.—The young ruler ſeems to have been under the ſame deluſion, when he had the aſſurance to declare, *All theſe things*, which are preſcribed by the divine law, *have I kept from my youth up* †.

A more peſtilent opinion, it is ſcarce poſſible for the mind of man to entertain. And nothing can appear more egregiouſly miſtaken, if we conſider the *vaſt comprehenſive* ſcope of the ſacred precepts; and are convinced, that they require a *moſt exact* conformity, in every particular, and every punctilio.

Ther. Is there nothing valuable, then, in regularity of conduct, and integrity of heart? nothing valuable in our acts of charity, and habits of virtue? nothing whatſoever that may recommend us to our Maker?

Aſp. From our *fellow-creatures* they ſtand entitled to reſpect, imitation, and gratitude. But before *infinite* perfection, they muſt drop their claim, and lie proſtrate in the duſt; imploring forgiveneſs, not challenging a reward. We all diſcern a beauty and a twinkling luſtre in the ſtars, when viewed under the ſhades of night. But, when the magnificent ſource of day ariſes, their beauty vaniſhes, their luſtre is darkneſs. *Such* are human accompliſhments, when compared with the perfect law, or beheld by the piercing eye, of the ſupremely-glorious GOD.

Ther. Methinks, this notion confounds the difference

which ſpring from that bitter root; theſe are *certainly* and *invariably* objects of the divine abhorrence.—This interpretation, I think, is moſt ſuitable, not only to fact in general, but to the import of this word in particular. See *Rom.* xi. 20. where it occurs in a ſimilar acceptation, μη υψηλοφρονει. *Be not high-minded.*—It ſeems alſo beſt to quadrate with the tenor of our SAVIOUR's reproof; *Ye are they that juſtify yourſelves before men;* but all ſuch arrogant attempts, and every ſuch elated air, the moſt holy GOD beholds with deteſtation.

* Luke xviii. 12. † Matth. xix. 20.

ence of good and evil; and, by rendering all our actions *blameable*, would render them all *alike*. This is levelling with a witneſs!

Aſp. It only ſhews, that there are blemiſhes in all. Whereas ſome are flaw and blemiſh all over. Is there no difference between the *leopard*'s ſpots, and the *raven*'s ſoot? If I maintain, that neither of thoſe animals are perfectly white, does this imply, that both are equally black?

All we perform, however *ſpecious* it may ſeem, is very *far ſhort* of our elevated rule; therefore cannot procure the divine favour, or entitle us to the kingdom of heaven.—Nay, if GOD ſhould enter into judgment with us, on the foot of our own performances; he would diſcover ſuch defects, even in the choiceſt inſtances of our obedience, as muſt render them matter of condemnation *, not meritorious of applauſe.

Be pleaſed to obſerve this penknife—What can be more exquiſitely *keen* than the edge, or more nicely *poliſhed* than the blade? but how do they appear, when beheld through one of thoſe microſcopes?

Ther. The edge leſs ſharp than the woodman's axe, or rather more *blunt* than his iron wedge. The poliſh reſembles a maſs of *coarſe* metal, rudely hammered on the anvil.

Aſp. How very delicate is the *cambric*, which forms your ruffles; and gives ſuch an ornamental air to your whole dreſs! Nothing can be finer than the threads, or more exact than the texture. But what is their appearance in a *microſcopic* view?

Ther. You would take the fine threads for hempen *cords;*

* To this aſſertion St *Cyril*, in concert with ſeveral other fathers bears a very expreſs teſtimony; Αυτο ημων το ορθως ειρασθαι δοκυν, μομφης και αιτιας αμοιρησειεν αν τι και περιβαλλομενον τε και βασανιζοντος Θεου *Even thoſe of our actions which ſeem to be performed in a right manner, could not eſcape cenſure and blame, if GOD ſhould examine, and bring them to the teſt.*

cords; and would almoſt be poſitive, that they had been *wattled* together by the clumſy hands of the hurdle-maker, rather than curiouſly wove in the artiſt's loom.

Aſp. That lovely piece of *enamel*, which makes a part of your lady's penſile equipage, quite charms the ſpectator with the juſtneſs of its figure, and the radiancy of its colours. But—

Ther. Under the ſcrutiny of this ſearching inſtrument, it loſes all its elegance; and inſtead of winning our admiration, provokes our contempt. It looks like a heap of mortar, *plaiſtered* on by the maſon's trowel.

Aſp. You ſee then, *Theron*, what groſs indelicacies, what bungling inequalities, this ſupplementary aid to our ſight diſcovers, even in the *moſt finiſhed* works of human art. So, and abundantly more, does the immaculate purity of GOD diſcern imperfections in our moſt upright deeds, and moſt guarded hours.

I ſaid *immaculate;* and I ought to have ſaid more. For GOD is not only unerringly wiſe to detect, but *infinitely* pure to abhor, all contamination. Angels, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, are endowed with immaculate, but the LORD is poſſeſſed of infinite purity.—Have you conſidered this attribute of the GODHEAD, *Theron?*

Ther. I have; and not without amazement at the charming, the awful deſcriptions of it, which occur in the ſacred writings.—GOD is not only holy, but, as the lawgiver of the *Jews* very ſublimely expreſſes himſelf, *glorious in holineſs* *. The ſacred penman, treating of this illuſtrious perfection, ſeems to labour the important point. They indulge the loftieſt flights of imagination; they employ the boldeſt figures of ſpeech; and add the moſt glowing colours of eloquence; not without frequent acknowledgments, that all the force of language is abundantly too *feeble* for the unutterable ſubject.

One

* Exod. xv. 11.

One of the prophets, addreſſing the KING eternal, immortal, inviſible, breaks out into this ecſtatic exclamation; *O LORD, my GOD, my HOLY ONE, thou art of purer eyes, than* (to *allow* ſhall I ſay? This is an aſcription of praiſe, unſpeakably too mean for thy ſurpaſſing excellency. Thou art of purer eyes, than) *to look upon evil, and canſt not behold iniquity* *:—Another, wrapt into a prophetic viſion, ſees the *ſeraphim* veiling their faces, in token of profound humiliation; hears thoſe ſons of ardour and love, crying in loud reſponſive ſtrains, *Holy, holy, holy is the LORD GOD of ſabaoth* †.—Nay, ſo tranſcendently holy, ſays

* Hab. i. 13.

† *Iſ.* vi. 3. The poets and writers of a bold imagination, are particularly fond of *machinery*; of introducing celeſtial beings, in order to give ſome peculiar dignity to their plan, or ſome additional ſtrength to their ſentiments. With inimitable propriety, and ſurpriſing emphaſis, is this ſpecies of fine writing uſed in ſcripture; eſpecially in the paſſage quoted above.

Let us only conſider—The *perſonages*. Theſe are the *ſeraphim*; pure and active ſpirits. Likened, by the Pſalmiſt, to flames of fire; ſtyled, by the apoſtle, dominions and principalities of heaven. Who excel in ſtrength and wiſdom; in every high and bright accompliſhment.—Their *attitude*. They wait around the KING immortal, ſeated on his exalted throne. They *ſtand*; are in a poſture of ſervice; with their wings outſtretched, ready to fly at the firſt ſignal. They ſtand, not with their eyes reverently caſt down; but with their *faces covered*, to denote the *deepeſt* ſelf-abaſement: as creatures, that are conſcious and aſhamed of their own meanneſs; or as overcome with the unſupportable glories which beam from uncreated majeſty. —Their *action*. They celebrate, not in cold converſation, but with rapturous ſongs, not with ſingle voices, but in a grand choir, (מ ש מ, ſee *Pſal.* lxxxvii. 5, 6.), the amiable yet tremendous ſanctity of the LORD almighty.—Their *manner* of *expreſſion*. Though filled and penetrated with the prodigious theme, they attempt not to deſcribe it. Impracticable that even by the tongues of angels! They expreſs themſelves, therefore, in the language of profound admiration; in repeated, in reiterated acclamations to the wonderful attribute; *Holy! holy! holy!*—The *effects* of this auguſt appearance. The poſts of

says another devout worshipper, that all created glory is totally eclipsed in his presence: *He looketh to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight* *. And *his very angels*, those refined and exalted intelligencies, *he chargeth with folly* †.

Asp. Very majestic descriptions!—And pray let us observe the impressions with such beamings of the divine effulgence made upon the saints of old.—*Moses*, drawing near the cloudy pavilion, the presence-chamber of the HOLY ONE of *Israel*, says with emotions of uncommon dread, *I exceedingly fear and quake* ‡!—When *Job* is favoured with some peculiar manifestations of the omnipotent GOD, see his posture!

the door shake at the voice: the ponderous and magnificent pillars of brass (see 2 *Chron.* iii. 17.) tremble like a leaf. The spacious and beautiful house is filled with tokens of the divine indignation; is involved in clouds of smoke; and joins with the trembling columns, and adoring seraphs, to tell the thoughtless world, *What a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living GOD!* The prophet himself is struck with astonishment; is overwhelmed with awe; and cries out, "as a woman in her "pangs."—Can any thing be more enlivened, impressive, and alarming?

If I shall not trespass upon the reader's patience, I would beg leave to add a remark concerning the word *sabaoth*: which though a *Hebrew* expression, is retained in that excellent hymn, entitled *Te Deum*; and which some people, I am inclined to believe, inadvertently confound with *sabbath*.—The latter signifies the *rest* of the seventh day; and in this connection, yields a sense not very apposite, and comparatively mean. Whereas the former denotes *armies* or *hosts*; and furnishes us with an image truly grand and majestic, worthy to be admitted into the songs of seraphs.—It glorifies GOD, as the great, universal, uncontrollable SOVEREIGN; who exercises a *supreme dominion* over all the orders of being, from the loftiest archangel that shines in heaven, to the lowest reptile that crawls in dust: who says to a legion of cherubs, *Go*; and they go;—to a swarm of insects, *Come*; and they come;—to any, to every creature, *Do this*; and they do it. *See* Matth. viii. 9.

* Job xxv. 5. † Job iv. 18. ‡ Heb. xii. 21.

ture! hear his words! *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes* *. How strong is the language! how deep the abasement!—When *Isaiah* saw the incomprehensible JEHOVAH sitting upon his throne, and the princes of heaven adoring at his footstool, seized with a pang of reverential fear, he cried out, *Wo is me! I am undone! for I am a man of unclean lips* †!—When *Ezekiel* beheld an emblematical representation of HIM, who dwelleth in light inaccessible; when the ANCIENT of days, veiled under a human shape, appeared to *Daniel;* though one was a devout priest, and each was an eminent prophet; yet, overwhelmed with a mixture of veneration and terror, they both *fell down at his feet as dead* ‡: and this, not before a full display, but only before a *glimpse* of the GOD-HEAD; which, tho' partial and transient, was too dazzlingly bright, for an eye of flesh to bear.

O my friend! my *Theron!* what figure must *our* mean performances, *our* low attainments, make before this immensely glorious GOD?—Let us examine the behaviour and spirit of *Job*, a little more particularly. He is one of your favourite examples; and indeed very deservedly; for in piety he had no superior, and no equal; *there was none like him in the earth;* yet, when he has to do with the MAKER of all things, and the JUDGE of all men, he pours out his abashed soul in these very remarkable professions: *If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me: If I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse* ‖.—He declares yet farther, *If I wash myself in snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou,* O righteous and eternal GOD, *plunge me in the ditch;* manifest me, notwithstanding all this care and circumspection, to be a guilty and filthy creature; yea, so very guilty and filthy, that my *own cloaths,* were they sensible of the pollution, *could not but abhor me.*

This he confesses, not because he was an habitual

* Job xlii. 6. † Is. vi. 5.

‡ Ezek. i. 28. Dan. x. 8, 9. ‖ *See* Job ix. 20, 21.—30, 31, 32.

ſinner, or chargeable with any ſcandalous immorality; but becauſe his mind was filled with the moſt affecting ſenſe of GOD's inconceivable holineſs, and infinite glory. *For*, adds the venerable SUFFERER, *he is not a man as I am;* but a BEING of ſuch extenſive knowledge, that nothing can eſcape his diſcernment; of ſuch exalted purity, that every ſpot of defilement is loathſome in his ſight. For which reaſon, it is abſolutely impoſſible, *that I ſhould anſwer him*, with reference to my own perſonal righteouſneſs; *or that we ſhould come together in judgment*, on any ſuch footing, without confuſion to myſelf, and ruin to my cauſe.

To all this he ſubjoins, what is ſtill more memorable and exemplary: *Tho' I were perfect, yet would I not know my ſoul, I would deſpiſe my life.*—He ſuppoſes himſelf in a higher ſtate than your moſt advanced Chriſtian; tho' I were *perfect*. Yet even in ſuch a ſtate, were it attainable and attained, *I would not know my ſoul;* not dwell upon, not plead, no, nor ſo much as cheriſh a thought of, my own accompliſhments and acquirements. In the important buſineſs of juſtification, they ſhould ſtand for ciphers; they ſhould be thrown into ſhades; they ſhould entirely diſappear.—Nay more, *I would deſpiſe my life;* my life, with all its moſt ſhining actions and moſt diſtinguiſhed virtues, ſhould be reckoned inſignificant and deſpicable: juſt as *inſignificant* and *deſpicable*, with reſpect to this great tranſaction, as a wandering ſpark would be, if appointed to diffuſe day amidſt the darkneſs of night, or produce ſpring amidſt the depths of winter.

Ther. Theſe are alarming hints, *Aſpaſio*, I muſt confeſs.—A law, which requires an *exact* and *univerſal* obedience, both in heart and life!—A GOD of ſuch majeſty, purity, and glory, that men of the moſt approved integrity are overwhelmed with *confuſion*, in his preſence!—I ſhall conſider them, at my leiſure, with the attention they deſerve.—At preſent, I believe, opportunity is giving us the ſlip. Yonder coach

ſeems

seems to be moving this way, and the livery looks like *Philander*'s.

Aspasio desirous to fix those convictions—which are of the *last* consequence to our faith and salvation—very desirous to fix them on his friend's mind, replied:

Asp. As your visitants are at a distance, give me leave to observe, That the wisest of men, attending the *first* of these particulars, has poured contempt upon all human excellency; *There is not a just man upon earth, that doth good and sinneth not* *. The apostle of *CHRIST* takes shame to himself, on the same account; and teaches all mankind to strike the sail of self-conceit; *In many things we offend all* †.—*David*, considering the *latter* of these points, prays with the utmost earnestness; *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O LORD!* and assigns this humbling reason for his petition; *for, in thy sight, shall no man living be justified* ‡. This induced *Nehemiah*, who had been so nobly zealous for the honour of his GOD, not to confide in his own valuable services, but make application to forgiving goodness: *Spare me, O LORD! according to thy great mercy* ‖.

Had I set before you the example of the poor *publican*, who smote upon his breast; durst not lift up his eyes to heaven; but cried from the bottom of a polluted heart, *God be merciful to me a sinner* †! *Self-love*, might possibly have whispered; "Surely I "am not to be ranked with that abominable wretch. "I stand upon some better footing than such an infa"mous offender."—With respect to the enjoyment of eternal life, we stand upon no better, upon no other. And when *low* as that obnoxious despised creature, we are upon the very same ground with the most *exalted* saints. They all appear before the MAJESTY of HEAVEN, in the same attitude of unfeigned humiliation, and with the same acknowledgments of utter

* Eccl. vii. 20. † Jam. iii. 2. ‡ Psal. cxliii. 2.
‖ Neh. xiii. 22. † Luke xviii. 13.

ter unworthineſs.—For it is a certain truth, and admits of *no* exception, that to juſtify ſinners, is not the privilege of human obedience, but the *ſole* prerogative of *the LORD our righteouſneſs*.

Ther. Is not the practice of *Hezekiah* an exception to your rule? Theſe, if I recollect aright, are the words of that holy king; *I beſeech thee, O LORD, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight* *. You ſee, he puts the iſſue of his trial before the everlaſting GOD, upon his own integrity and his own obedience.

Aſp. Theſe are his words but they are not uſed with *this* view. He humbly repreſents before the great SOVEREIGN of the world, how beneficial his former life *had been*, and how ſerviceable his prolonged life *might be* to the beſt intereſts of the *Jewiſh* nation. He recurs to his obedience, not that he may eſtabliſh his hope of eternal happineſs in heaven; but that he may obtain a reprieve from the grave, and a lengthening of his tranquillity on earth.—Neither is this obedience gloried in by way of merit; but only pleaded by way of argument: As though he had ſaid; "*Remember*, gracious GOD, how I have exerted my "royal authority, to ſuppreſs idolatry, to extirpate "vice, and to promote thy true religion. *Conſider* "how greatly thy people ſtand in need of ſuch a vi-"gilant and zealous governor; and to what a miſer-"able condition both church and ſtate may be redu-"ced, if thou takeſt away thy ſervant by this threat-"ened but untimely ſtroke. And for the welfare of "*Judah*, for the honour of thy name, for the ſup-"port of thy own worſhip, *O ſpare me a little!*"

Aſpaſio pauſed, expecting a reply.—As *Theron* continued ſilent and muſing, *Aſpaſio*, with a ſmile of benevolence, proceeded.—Come, my *Theron;* why ſo deep in thought? Have you any objection to the evidences I have

* 2 Kings xx. 3.

I have produced?—They are ſome of the moſt *dignified* characters and *illuſtrious* perſonages, that could be ſelected from all ages; kings, princes, and patriots; prieſts, ſaints, and martyrs. Should theſe be deemed inſufficient, I can exhibit a larger and nobler cloud of witneſſes;—*larger*, for they are a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues;—*nobler*, for they ſtand before the throne, and before the LAMB, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.—Aſk thoſe ſhining armies, Who they are, and whence they came? Their anſwer is comprized in one of my favourite portions of ſcripture; one of thoſe delightful texts, from which I hope to derive conſolation even in my laſt moments. For which reaſon, you will allow me to repeat it, though it may perhaps be mentioned in a former converſation. *We are they who came out of great tribulation; and have waſhed our robes, and made them white in the blood of the LAMB: therefore are we before the throne* *.

Some of them laid down their lives for the ſake of *CHRIST;* many of them were eminent for works of righteouſneſs; all of them were endued with real holineſs. Yet none of theſe qualifications conſtituted their *paſſport* into the regions of endleſs felicity. They had *waſhed their robes;* had fled to the atonement, and pleaded the merits of *JESUS* their SAVIOUR:—Hereby they had *made them white;* this was the cauſe of their acquittance from guilt, and their complete juſtification:—And *therefore*, on this account, their perſons were accepted; they were preſented without ſpot before the throne; and admitted to that fulneſs of joy, which is at GOD's right hand for evermore.

Ther. I have no objection to your witneſſes. But, methinks, your doctrine is ſtrangely *debaſing* to human nature.

Aſp.

* Rev. vii. 14, 15.

Asp. A sign, *Theron*, that it is agreeable to the genius of the *gospel:* which is calculated, as the eloquent *Isaiah* foretold, to humble the sinner, and exalt the SAVIOUR *: *The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day* †:
" Man, though naturally vain shall be made sensible
" of his numberless offences; shall see the defects
" which attend his highest attainments; shall confess
" the impossibility of being justified by the deeds of
" the law; and place all his hope upon the propi-
" tiatory death, and meritorious obedience, of the
" *LORD JESUS CHRIST.*"

* This corresponds with a very valuable maxim, which an eminent divine once recommended to his people, as a touchstone to distinguish *evangelical* truth.—That doctrine, he said, which tends

To humble the sinner;
To exalt the SAVIOUR;
To promote holiness;

That doctrine which tends to accomplish *all* these designs, you may embrace as sound. That which is defective in its influence on *any one* of them, you should reject as corrupt.

† Is. ii. 11.

DIALOGUE IX.

THERON, impressed with the last conversation, was very desirous to resume the subject, and renew the important debate. With this view, he conducted his friend into a retirement, commodious for the purpose.

They enter a spacious *lawn;* which lay opposite to the house, and stretched itself in the form of an expanded fan. The mounds on either side, were dressed in verdure, and ran out in a slaunting direction.

The

The whole, to an eye placed at a distance, bore the resemblance of a magnificent *vista;* contracting, by slow degrees, its dimensions; and lessening, at last, into a point: which the regular and graceful seat, with all imaginable dignity, supplied.

Nature had sunk the lawn into a gentle *decline:* on whose ample sides, were oxen browzing, and lambs frisking. The lusty droves lowed, as they passed; and the thriving flocks bleated welcome music in their master's ear.—Along the midst of this verdant slope, ran a spacious and extensive *walk:* which, coated with gravel, and fenced with pallisadoes, looked like a plain stripe of brown, intersecting a carpet of the brightest green.—At the bottom, two handsome *canals*, copiously stocked with fish, floated to the breeze: whose waters, beheld from every front-room in the house, had a fine effect upon the sight, not without a refreshing influence on the imagination.—At the extremity of one, stood a stately *colonnade*. The roof was elevated on pillars of the *Ionic* order; and the area slabbed with stones, neatly ranged in the diamond-fashion. Several forest-chairs accommodated the anglers with a seat, while the bending dome supplied them with a shade.

Corresponding, and on the margin of the other canal, was erected a *summer-house*, of a very singular kind.—The lower part had an opening towards the north. It was cool; it was gloomy; and had never seen the sun. It carried the romantic air of a *grotto*, or rather the pensive appearance of a *hermit's cell*. The outside was coarse and rugged with protuberant stones. Partly overspread with ivy, partly covered with moss, it seemed to be the work of ancient years.—You descend, by steps of turf, through a low and narrow door. A scanty iron grate, instead of a large sweeping sash, transmits a glimmering light; just sufficient to discover the inner structure: which appeared like one continued piece of rock-work; a cavern cut,

you would imagine, from the surrounding quarry.—*Above*, hung an irregular arch, with an aspect rather threatening, than inviting. *Below*, lay a paving of homely pebbles; in some places, a little furrowed, as though it had been worn by the frequent tread of solitary feet. *All around*, were rusticity and solemnity; solemnity never more visibly seen than thro' a gloom.—The furniture of the same *grotesque* fashion with the apartment. A bench hewed, you would suspect, by nature's chisel, out of the solid stone: a sort of couch, composed of swelling moss, and small fibrous roots.—From one corner, trickled a pure spring, which crept with a bubbling moan, along the channelled floor, till its healthy current was collected into a bason, rudely scooped from the ground. On the edge of this little receptacle, lay chained a rusty bowl, and over it stood an antique worm-eaten table.—On the least obscure part of the wall, you discern, *dimly* discern, a parchment scroll, inscribed with that sage, but mortifying admonition, VANITY OF VANITIES! ALL IS VANITY!

Over this recess, so pleasingly horrid, and adapted to solemn musings, arose an open and airy *Belvidere*. You ascend by winding stairs; and coming from the *uncouth* abode below, are sweetly surprised with an *elegant* hexagon.—The ceiling lofty, and decorated with the softest, richest, almost-flowing fret-work. The wainscot, in large pannels of oak, retained its native auburn: so *beautifully plain*, that, like an amiable countenance, it would have been disfigured, rather than improved, by the most costly paint. On this were disposed, in gilded frames, and to great advantage, a variety of entertaining *landscapes*. But none surpassed, none equalled, all were a foil to, the noble lovely views which the windows commanded.—The chimney-piece, of white shining marble, streaked with veins of vivid red. *Over it* was carved a fine festoon of artificial, *in it* was ranged a choice collection of natural

tural flowers.—On a table of gloſſy walnut, lay a portable *teleſcope*, attended with *Thomſon's Seaſons*, and *Vanierii Prædium Ruſticum* *.

The whole was fitted up in the higheſt taſte, and furniſhed with every pleaſurable ornament: on purpoſe to harmonize with that *laviſh gaiety*, which ſeemed to ſmile over all the face of nature; on purpoſe to correſpond with that *vernal delight*, which came breathing on the wings of every fragrant gale. I may add, on purpoſe to remind the beholder of thoſe *immortal manſions*, which are decorated with images infinitely more ſplendid, with objects unſpeakably more glorious: where holy beings will ſpend, not a few vacant hours in refined amuſement, but a boundleſs eternity in the conſummation of joy.—For, to a well-turned mind, nature is a preceptor; and theſe are her *inſtructive* leſſons. To the pure in heart, even ſenſe is edifying; and theſe are its *delicate* moralities.

The redundant waters of the canal rolled off in a ſpreading *caſcade*; which, tumbling from many a little precipice, ſoothed the air with a ſymphony of ſoft and gurgling ſounds; nor ever intermitted the obliging office,

From morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve.

But, when the fanning *breezes* dropt their wings, when the feathered choir were huſhed in ſleep, when not ſo much as a chirping graſhopper was heard throughout the meads, this liquid inſtrument ſtill played its *ſolo*;

* *Vanierii prædium ruſticum*—A moſt elegant *Latin poem*; which treats of every remarkable peculiarity relating to the buſineſs of a country-life, or the furniture of a country-ſeat,—It entertains us with a deſcription of the moſt *agreeable* objects, in an eaſy flow of the *pureſt* language, and moſt *muſical* numbers.

It is, I think, one continued beauty: ſuperior to every thing of the kind I have met with among the moderns; and ſcarcely, if at all, unworthy the firſt genius of the *Auguſtan* age. *Uni Virgilo ſecundus, et pene par.*

ſtill purſued its buſy way, and warbled, as it flowed, melodious murmurs.

Aſp. Such, *Theron*; ſo uniform, uninterrupted, and invariable, ſhould be *our* conformity to the divine law.—But alas! thoſe ſacred precepts are ſo *exceeding broad*, that the moſt enlarged human obedience is far from being commenſurate to their extent; ſo *abſolutely holy*, that our higheſt attainments fall vaſtly ſhort of their exalted perfection.—How then can we expect juſtification from ſuch a conſummate rule? How dare we place our dependence upon ſuch imperfect duties? eſpecially before a GOD of unerring diſcernment, and immaculate purity.

Ther. Becauſe mankind are incapable of pleaſing their MAKER, by yielding an *abſolute* and *invariable* obedience to the moral law; does it follow from thence that they cannot render themſelves acceptable to him, by an univerſal courſe of ſincere obedience?

Aſp. I think, it follows from what has been already obſerved, if you deſire new arguments, they are at hand.

The law, ſays the teacher of the *Gentiles*, *is the miniſtration of condemnation* *. How can this be true, if it requires no more than a *ſincere* obedience; ſuch as is proportioned to our infirm ſtate? If this be ſufficient to juſtify, and entitle us to our CREATOR's favour, the law ceaſes to be the miniſtration of condemnation. It becomes (which is flatly contradictory to the apoſtle's doctrine) the miniſtration of righteouſneſs.

The law is ſtyled, by the ſame inſpired teacher, *a ſchoolmaſter to* bring us to *CHRIST* †. How can it, upon

* 2 *Cor.* iii. 7. In *this* place, I apprehend, the apoſtle means the *moral* law, and that principally; as that alone was *written and engraven on ſtones*. Elſewhere, I believe, he uſes the word in a larger ſenſe; and intends to exclude *all* law whatever, from bearing any ſhare in our juſtification.

† *Gal.* iii. 24. Παιδαγωγος, *a ſchoolmaſter*: who pretends not to *finiſh* the education of youth; but directs them to, and prepares

upon your ſuppoſition, be qualified for ſuch an office? If a ſincere obedience be the whole of its demands, it can no longer direct us to *CHRIST;* it will no longer deliver us over to a REDEEMER's merit; but muſt draw and attach us to *itſelf;* teaching us to look upon its precepts, and our own conſcientious obſervance of them, as the tenure of eternal life.

Do you inſiſt upon a third proof? A third preſents itſelf; not ſo much founded on argumentation, as deduced from example.—How was *Abraham* *, the friend of GOD, and father of the faithful, juſtified? By a courſe of ſincere obedience? No; but by faith in the promiſed MESSIAH. *Abraham worked not*, with a view to obtain juſtification; *but believed on him, who juſtifieth the ungodly.*—How was *David* *, the man after GOD's own heart, juſtified? By his zeal for the LORD, and by his eminent ſervices? No; but by a righ-

pares them for, higher ſtudies, or nobler employs. The law, in like manner, aims not at furniſhing us with a title to happineſs; but *fits, diſpoſes*, and *diſciplines* us, for the all-ſufficient REDEEMER.

Some have thought, that τε χριστον ſignifies, *until the coming of CHRIST.* But this will hardly conſiſt with the genius of the language, or with the import of the following clauſe, *That we might be juſtified by faith.*—Beſides, this would confine the efficacy of the law to that period of time which preceded our LORD's incarnation. Whereas, it *ſtill* does, and *always* will *act*, (until this corruptible ſhall put on incorruption,) in a way of ſubſerviency to its merits.

* * Theſe two examples are, with the trueſt judgment, ſelected, and with the utmoſt propriety applied, *Rom.* iv. 1. *&c. Rom.* iv. 6. *&c.*—*Abraham* was the moſt illuſtrious pattern of piety, among the *Jewiſh* patriarchs: *In glory there was none like him*, Ecclus xliv. 19. *David* was the moſt zealous and ſeraphic of their kings; *a man after GOD's own heart*, 1 Sam. xiii. 14. If neither of theſe was juſtified by *his own* obedience, but each by *an imputed* righteouſneſs; if they both obtained acceptance with GOD, not as *upright* beings, who might claim it; but as *ſinful* creatures, who muſt implore it; the conſequence is glaring. It is ſuch, as muſt ſtrike every attentive underſtanding, and muſt affect every individual perſon.

a righteouſneſs imputed: even that righteouſneſs of the bleſſed REDEEMER, through which *iniquity is forgiven, and ſin pardoned.*—And can we be ſaid to walk *humbly*, or can we be thought to walk *ſurely*, if refuſing to tread in the ſteps of theſe exemplary ſaints, we divert into a path of our own deviſing?

Ther. "Of our own deviſing!"—No, my friend: there is a *milder* law introduced by the goſpel, condeſcending and merciful to our infirmities, which accepts of ſincerity inſtead of perfect obedience.

Aſp. When was this milder law introduced, and the ſtricter abrogated?—Not upon the entrance of ſin, I preſume. At this rate, the original law muſt be the creature of a *few days*, perhaps of a *few hours* only. But can we imagine, that the all-wiſe and unchangeable GOD would ordain a ſyſtem of precepts to be diſannulled as ſoon as enacted?—Not in our LORD's time, I am very certain. That holy commandment, which requires *ſupreme* love to GOD, and *perfect* charity to men, he aſſures us, was ſtill in force *. Nay, it is evident, from the nature of the DEITY, and from our relation to one another, that it always will be in force; that it never can ceaſe; but is neceſſary and everlaſting.

"A milder law, condeſcending to our infirmities."—What can be the purport of ſuch an inſtitution? It muſt be ſuppoſed to ſpeak the following language: "Be it known unto you, O children of *Adam*, that "you are no longer injoined to love the LORD "with all your ſtrength, nor to love your neighbour "as yourſelves.—*Once*, indeed, I inſiſted upon abſo"lute purity of heart; *now* I can diſpenſe with ſome "degree of evil concupiſcence.—Since *CHRIST* is "come, and his goſpel preached, you need not always "be clothed with humility; but may feel ſome little "emotions of pride.—In ſhort, becauſe you are *weak*,

"I will

* Matth. xxii. 37, 38, 39.

" I will *connive*, or even accommodate my demands " to your enfeebled and depraved condition."

Not to urge, (what must be shocking to every ear,) that such a doctrine would make the HOLY ONE of GOD a minister of sin; and the gospel of our salvation, a patent for licentiousness. Let me only ask, —Does this agree with our LORD's declaration? *One jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled* *.—Is this suitable to the perfections of the divine LEGISLATOR, *with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning* †?—Will this consist with the avowed resolution of the almighty JEHOVAH? *He will magnify the law, and make it honourable* ‡.

Ther. However you may decry what I call the milder law, St *Paul* asserts it to be the *Christian* scheme. This he strenuously argues for, as the only scheme by which any man can be justified in the sight of GOD.

Asp. Does he, *Theron?* In what epistle? what chapter? what verse?—He says, addressing himself to the *Galatian* converts, *I do not frustrate the grace of GOD*; *for, if righteousness come by the law, CHRIST is dead in vain* ||. From which passage, we learn two very momentous truths: That were we to derive a justifying righteousness from the law, this would not only be *derogatory* to the honour of grace, but *subversive* of its very being:—That, by seeking justification through our own conscientious behaviour, we make, as far as in us lies, the death of *CHRIST*, a *vain* thing; for which there was no occasion, and of which there is no use.

To the same purpose it is written in that invaluable epistle to the *Romans* ⸸, *If they which are of the law be heirs;* if they who trust to their own performance of the law, are thereby entitled to the heavenly inheritance; *faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.*

* Matth. v. 18. † Jam. i. 17. ‡ Is. xlii. 21.
|| Gal. ii. 21. ⸸ Rom. iv. 14.

effect.—See now, my friend, the tendency of your opinion! It is not a mere speculative miſtake; an error of inconſiderable conſequence; but ſuch as ſtrikes at the fundamentals of the goſpel. Inſtead of being the only *Chriſtian* ſcheme, it totally overthrows * *Chriſtianity* itſelf. For it would render the promiſe abortive, and ſuperſede the neceſſity of faith. It would deſtroy the very exiſtence of grace, and make even the death of *CHRIST* a ſuperfluous tranſaction.

Ther. This I ſee, *Aſpaſio*, that the method of obtaining acceptance on account of our own ſincerity, is a benign expedient; ſuch as correſponds, with the compaſſionate nature of the DEITY; and is, what the apoſtle ſtyles, *being juſtified by faith, without the deeds of the law*.

Aſp. How! To be juſtified by faith, and juſtified by ſincerity, the *ſame* thing!—Is it poſſible, that theſe ſhould be *equivalent* terms?—Let me illuſtrate my query by a ſimilitude which our preſent ſituation ſuggeſts. Sometimes, an eaſy compariſon is more convincing than a laboured argument.

From this pleaſing eminence, we command an extenſive view of the country. Our eye connects the artleſs grandeur of nature, with the elegant embelliſhments

* St. *Paul* ſays of thoſe preachers, who taught juſtification by the works of the law, *They would pervert* or (as the original word μεταστρεψαι may be tranſlated) ſubvert and overthrow *the goſpel of CHRIST*.—To pervert, give a *wrong turn*, or a *falſe colour*, ſeems not to expreſs fully the apoſtle's idea, nor to preſerve the native energy of his argument. The *Greek* word is equivalent to the *Hebrew* הפך which we generally render *evertere*. Gal. i. 7.

It may be worth our while to tranſcribe *Beza*'s deſcant upon the paſſage: which is no leſs pertinent, than it is important. *Quid enim magis contrarium eſt fidei, ſive gratuitæ juſtificationi, quam juſtificatio ex lege, ſive meritis, non CHRISTI ſed noſtris? Itaque qui volunt iſta duo conciliare, magis etiam ſunt inepti, quam ſi quis conetur lucem cum tenebris, mortem cum vita conjungere.*

ments of the ſummer-houſe. Nor is the public road the leaſt entertaining part of the ſcene: becauſe it preſents us with a *moving picture;* with a perpetual ſucceſſion of new objects.—How many travellers have paſſed in review, ſince we took our ſeat in this agreeable elevation! Juſt at this inſtant, a *ſtage-coach* bolts out of the lane; filled, I preſume, with paſſengers, that reſide in the neighbourhood, or are to lodge in the next market-town. We will ſuppoſe them ſet down at their journey's end. An acquaintance viſits them; congratulates them on their arrival; and aſks that cuſtomary queſtion, "how they came?"—"We "came," ſay they, "without walking a ſtep our-"ſelves; yet by walking, as well, and as far, as we "were able."—Is this anſwer *intelligible?* are theſe methods of travelling *conſiſtent?* So intelligible is my friend's doctrine. So conſiſtent is juſtification, vouchſafed *without* the deeds of the law; and juſtification obtained, by performing the deeds of the law, *as well* as we are able.

Ther. Without the law, ſignifies, without the neceſſity of an exact and unerring conformity to it.

Aſp. This is not *without*, but *by* the law, qualified in the rigour of its demands, and departing ſomewhat from the perfection of its precepts. Could you affirm, with any propriety, that this part of the hemiſphere is *without the ſun*, becauſe an intervening cloud has moderated its fervour, and abated its glare?

What ſays the apoſtle? His words in another place, will determine his meaning in this. If a ſtate of acceptance with GOD be *of works;* be referable to our own obedience, whether ſincere or perfect; *it is no more of grace* *. Works and grace, in point of juſtification,

* *Rom.* xi. 6. The paſſage produced by *Aſpaſio*, refers *immediately* to the doctrine of election, and but *remotely* to the privilege of juſtification. However, as the former includes the latter, if *that* be perfectly free, *this* cannot be the conſequence of works. The argument, therefore, I apprehend, is concluſive, though the proof is not ſo direct.

cation, are irreconcileable oppoſites *. On this pinnacle they cannot ſtand together. One muſt ſupplant and overthrow the other.

But why do I ſpeak of grace? If my friend's opinion prevail, grace is at an end. What we took to be the goſpel, turns out a covenant of works. Salvation ceaſes to be a free gift, and becomes a neceſſary payment. For *to him that worketh*, that performeth what the law requires, *is the reward not reckoned of grace; but* he may claim it, as his due; it muſt be paid him, as matter *of debt* †.

Ther. You take no notice of what I urged concerning the *benignity* of this ſcheme, and how much it magnifies the *clemency* of the great LEGISLATOR.

Aſp. But why ſhould clemency erect its throne, on the *ruins* of almoſt every other attribute?—This method would diſhonour the *veracity* of GOD, which has denounced a curſe upon every deviation from his revealed will.—It would depretiate the *adminiſtration* of his juſtice, which cannot but puniſh whatever violates his ſacred precepts.—It would greatly derogate from the *dignity* of his law, and make it a mere thing of wax; to bend, and truckle, and take its form from the ſin and weakneſs of human nature.

Ther. Will the divine law then make no favourable allowances for human infirmities, for conſtitutional faults and ſtrength of paſſion?

Aſp. Far be it from me to repreſent the law of the MOST HIGH, either more ſtrict, or more yielding, than it really is. To avoid all poſſibility of ſuch a miſtake, let us hear the declaration of the law itſelf: *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things, that are written in the book of the law, to do them* ‡.

Every

* *E diametro inter ſe opponuntur, Moſes et JESUS CHRISTUS; lex et promiſſio; facere et credere; opera et fides; merces et donum.* BENGEL.

† Rom. iv. 4. ‡ Gal. iii. 10.

Every one; without any exception of perſons; without any regard to pleas, either of human weakneſs, or violent temptation.—*That continueth not;* it is not enough to obſerve theſe holy commandments, in the general tenor of our converſation. Our courſe of obedience muſt be without any intermiſſion; from the earlieſt dawn of reaſon, to the lateſt period of life.—*In all things;* we muſt refrain from all the ſins that are forbidden, and from every approach towards them. We muſt practiſe all the virtues that are injoined, and in their full extent of perfection.

In a word, the law inſiſts upon obedience, perfect in its *principle;* perfect in all its *parts;* perfect in every *degree;* and in each of theſe reſpects *perpetual*†. —The leaſt deficiency in any one particular, renders us liable to vengeance; and, notwithſtanding any repentance for tranſgreſſions, notwithſtanding all pretenſions to ſincerity of heart, ſubjects us to the curſe.

Theron pauſed.—He ſeemed to be ſtruck with ſurpriſe.—But rallying his thoughts, replied, If this be the ſenſe of the paſſage, who of all fleſh can be ſaved?

Aſp. Say rather, if the extent of the divine law be ſo enlarged, if its demands be ſo high, and its ſanction ſo awfully rigorous, then muſt every mouth be ſtopped;—then is all the world become guilty before GOD;—and *by the works of the law ſhall no man living be juſtified.*

Ther. Will not ſuch exceſſively-ſevere doctrine drive people into deſpondency, or even drown them in *deſpair?*

Aſp. No *Theron*, unleſs it be *ſuch* a deſpair, as is the parent of heavenly hope; and productive of thoſe

 amiable

† That the law inſiſts upon an obedience *abſolutely perfect*, will be farther evident to the attentive reader, if he conſiders the tenor of St *Paul*'s argumentation, in his epiſtle to the *Romans*, and to the *Galatians;* particularly *Rom.* iii. 23. iv. 15. *Gal.* iii. 21.

amiable twins, peace and joy: A deſpair, I mean, of being reconciled to our offended GOD, and of obtaining eternal hapineſs, by any ſatisfaction or any duties of our own.

Ther. Surely, you forget the gracious *manifeſto*, publiſhed by the condeſcending KING of heaven; *If there be firſt a willing mind, it is accepted, according to what a man hath, not according to what he hath not* *. Is it not plain from this text, that infinite goodneſs will admit our honeſt, tho' imperfect endeavours; and, ſince we are not able to pay an *unſinning*, will mercifully accept our *beſt* obedience?

Aſp. I do not forget, but poſſibly my friend may miſapply the gracious *manifeſto*.—To whom was the word of this conſolation ſent? To true believers who had *given their own ſelves to the LORD* †; who *were eſtabliſhed in CHRIST* ‡; *and abounded in faith* ‖.—If you likewiſe, my dear *Theron*, acknowledge yourſelf a vile ſinner in your worſt, and an unprofitable ſervant in your beſt eſtate: if, in conſequence of this acknowledgment, you fly for refuge to the wounds of a *crucified* SAVIOUR; and rely, for ſalvation, only on *his obedience* unto death; then you imitate thoſe *Corinthian* converts; then you may apply that indulgent declaration to yourſelf; and then would I venture to addreſs you, in the elegant and chearing language of the royal PREACHER; *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for GOD* now *accepteth* ⸸ both thy perſon, and thy performances.

But,

* 2 Cor. viii. 12. † 2 Cor. viii. 5. ‡ 2 Cor. i. 21.
‖ 2 Cor. viii. 7.

⸸ *Eccl.* ix. 7.—*Aſpaſio*'s remark diſcovers an *ambiguity* in the word *accepted*.—If people mean, that ſincere obedience ſhall be accepted, as *their juſtifying* righteouſneſs, as that which conſtitutes their title to everlaſting felicity; the propoſition is extremely falſe.—If they mean, that the ſincere obedience of

But, if you overlook the righteouſneſs of the bleſſed *JESUS;* if you depend upon yourſelf and your own attainments; you are (how ſhall I ſpeak it!) not accepted, but accurſed. In ſuch a caſe, you have already heard your doom denounced by the leader of the *Jews*, and may hear it ratified by the apoſtle of the *Gentiles; As many as are of the works of the law*, who ſeek juſtification by their own obſervance of its commands, *are under the curſe* *.

Ther. Under the curſe! Becauſe our attempts to obey, though faithfully exerted, are attended with defects! Is not this unreaſonable and ſhocking? *Unreaſonable*, that the GOD of juſtice ſhould eſtabliſh a law of ſuch conſummate perfection, as no child of *Adam* can, even with his utmoſt aſſiduity and care, fulfil? *Shocking*, that the GOD of mercy ſhould thunder out ſo ſevere a denunciation on the leaſt inadvertent breach, on every unavoidable failure?—This exceeds the relentleſs rigour of *Draco*, or the tyrannical impoſitions of the *Ægyptian* taſkmaſters. *Draco* is ſaid to have written his laws in blood. Yet he never enacted ſuch inſtitutions, as were abſolutely too ſtrict and difficult to be obſerved. And, though the *Ægyptian* taſkmaſters inſiſted upon the full tale of bricks, without allowing the neceſſary proportion of ſtraw, yet the puniſhment they inflicted, was incomparably leſs than everlaſting deſtruction.

Aſp. If GOD almighty, in delivering his law to fallen mankind, intended to propoſe the *means* of their *juſtification;* your argument would be valid, and your inference

of believers, though very imperfect in itſelf, ſhall be *graciouſly regarded* in *CHRIST*, and find favour through his all-recommending merit; the ſentiment is unqueſtionably true.—Is ſincerity the *effect of faith?* Then we may rejoice in it, with the happy apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* i. 12. Would ſincerity be the *condition of our juſtification?* Then we muſt renounce it, with holy *Job*, chap. ix. 15.

* Gal. iii. 10.

inference undeniable. But the SUPREME LEGISLATOR had a very different, a far more myſterious deſign.—However, before I proceed to touch upon this point, let me deſire to know *your* opinion.

For what reaſons, think you, was the law ordained?

Ther. For what reaſons?—To deter men from the commiſſion of vice, and excite them to the practice of virtue.—To ſet before them a rule for their conduct; which if they diligently obſerve, they ſhall be *rewarded* with eternal happineſs; which if they preſumptuouſly tranſgreſs, they ſhall be *puniſhed* with eternal miſery.

Aſp. If man had never fallen, this doctrine had been ſound divinity, and this method a practicable ſcheme. But, ever ſince the *fall*, ſuch a way of ſalvation is ſomewhat like the *north-eaſt* paſſage. As mountains of ice, and the ſevereſt rigours of winter, block up *this*; ſo extreme impotence in man, and the utmoſt perfection in the law, bar up *that*.—*The law*, ſaith the apoſtle, *is weak*; is incapable of furniſhing us with a title to the heavenly felicity *; not through any defect in its precepts, but *through the fleſh*; through the inability of our degenerate nature.

Yet I muſt confeſs, you are not alone in your opinion. Multitudes have unwarily entertained the ſame notion: not apprehenſive, that they fruſtrate hereby the grace of GOD, and render it of none effect with regard to themſelves.—If you examine the *ſcriptural* account, you will find it quite of another ſtrain.

Ther. Pray let me hear the ſcriptural account. For, whenever thoſe DIVINE ORACLES ſpeak, I am all attention.

* *Rom.* viii. 3. Therefore he ſays in another place, *IF there had been a law given, which could have given life*, Gal. iii. 21. It is the ſame way of ſpeaking, and intended to denote the very ſame *impoſſibility*, which is implied in that ſpeech of *JEHOVAH* to *Abraham*; *If a man can number the duſt of the earth*, Gen xiii. 16.

tention. Where-ever they interpose their authority, I am all submission.

Asp. By the law is the knowledge of sin *. Far from being our justifier, it is our accuser. It arraigns and proves us guilty. It demonstrates, beyond all possibility of contradiction, that the very best among us have failed and come short of our duty; nay, that the very best among us have done amiss, and dealt wickedly.

I was alive without the law once, says the apostle †. I thought myself upright and holy; and entitled, by virtue of these qualifications, to life eternal. *But when the commandment came*, shining in its purity, and operating with power, *sin revived;* a clear and lively sense of guilt shot, like a piercing ray, through all my soul. I saw myself chargeable with many past provocations. I felt myself subject to much remaining corruption. In consequence of which, *I died;* my vain conceits were blasted; my presumptuous hopes expired; I could not but acknowledge myself justly liable to condemnation and death.

Ther. It had this affect on *Saul*, when he was a malignant and barbarous persecutor. But, when people are *virtuous* and *benevolent*, what purpose does it then serve?

Asp. A very important one; yet such as may, probably, at the first hearing, affect you with a little surprise. *The law entered*, says the apostle, *that the offence might—*

Ther. Be *restrained*, no doubt.

Asp. That the offence might *abound* ‡, is the assertion.

Ther. Surprising indeed! Is it possible that GOD's law should give countenance to sin? nay, add spurs to the sinner?

Asp. Let us beware of mistaking our sacred casuist. The law entered, not that the *commission* of sin might be *authorised*, but that the *abundance* of our sins might be

* Rom. iii. 20. † Rom. vii. 9. ‡ Rom. v. 20.

be *manifeſted:* that all mankind, even your virtuous perſons, may perceive the great multitude of their iniquities; the greater impurity of their hearts *; together with the utter imperfection of their higheſt attainments, and beſt ſervices.

This end could not be anſwered by a law, relaxed in its demands, or warping to our weakneſs; only by a ſyſtem of precepts, *every* way exact, and in *all* degrees perfect.—Whoever would repreſent to his neighbour, the ſpots that ſully, or the ſcars that disfigure his countenance, muſt effect the deſign, not by a ſtained, but by a pure mirror.

Ther. The knowledge of ſin, and a conviction of our exceeding ſinfulneſs!—theſe are intentions, which I ſhould not have ſuſpected.

Aſp. Theſe are not all. There is another intention of the law, equally neceſſary, and no leſs awful. *It reveals the wrath of GOD, againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men* †.—Having ſet before the ſinner, his innumerable offences, and enormous guilt; it denounces the doom, which he deſerves. It unſheaths the ſword of juſtice, and threatens the offender with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the LORD.

Ther. A modern writer ſuppoſes, that GOD may *ſet aſide* the law, in favour of frail men. I might far more reaſonably ſuppoſe, that he would *mitigate* the law, on the ſame conſideration. But what you urge, makes me afraid to lean on ſo precarious a prop.

Aſp. To look for comfort and ſalvation from this quarter, would be *to lean*, as the *Arabian* proverb ſpeaks, *on a wave of the ſea:* which will not only fail to ſupport, but will certainly ſwallow up the unadviſed, and raſh depender.

No, *Theron;* rather than the divine law ſhould loſe its honours, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were laid in aſhes; the

* *And* therefore *was law giv'n them, to evince*
Their natural pravity. MILT. b. XII. 287.

† Rom. i. 18.

the ancient world was destroyed with a deluge; the present frame of nature is destined to the flames, and all its unholy inhabitants will be condemned to hell.—Nay, rather than the *least tittle* should pass unaccomplished, its curse has been executed on GOD's own SON, and all its injunctions have been fulfilled in the person of *JESUS CHRIST*.

Ther. As I dare not confide in the modern provisionary *salvo*, so neither can I accede to your severe and terrifying notions.—The laws of a wise and beneficent governor, are calculated for the *good* of his subjects. What good, what advantage can accrue to us from receiving such a sentence, and possessing such convictions?

Asp. Though I might mention many advantages, I shall content myself with selecting one; which is not only valuable in itself, but the introduction to *every* spiritual blessing.—When, by the instrumentality of the law and the illumination of the SPIRIT, we are brought under such convictions; then we are taught to *see* our danger; then we are made to *feel* our misery; and then we shall no longer sleep in security, but solicitously look out for deliverance, and gladly accept the sovereign remedy.

Ther. The law, according to your representation, is intended to *accuse* me,—to *convict* me,—to *condemn* me. So it becomes, instead of a salutary, a killing system.

*Asp. The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life**. If we adhere to the literal sense, without attending to the spiritual design: if we regard only the precept and the sanction, as they stand in *themselves*; and neither consider, nor improve them, as acting in *subserviency* to the MEDIATOR's righteousness; they are doubtless a killing ordinance, and bind us down under a sentence of death. But rightly improved,—Hold! let me proceed no farther with the argument.

You are a sportsman, *Theron*, and delight in the manly

* 2 Cor iii. 6.

manly recreations of the field. You must therefore have read that fine poem, which so elegantly describes your favourite diversion.

Ther. *The* CHACE, I suppose, you mean.

Asp. The same.—Do you remember the large description of the *royal stag-chace?*

Ther. Perfectly well. It is not a week since I perused the whole passage; and with as much pleasure as if it had been entirely new.

Asp. Then you can give me a summary of the agreeable narrative.

Ther. I can. But will not this chace lead us away very far from our subject?

Asp. Perhaps, not so far as you imagine. I have a reason for my request.

What reason, I beseech you?

Asp. You shall soon know. Only favour me with the account.

Ther. I protest, I cannot discern the least connection between these rural sports, and the grand topic of our conversation. However, since you command, I will implicitly obey.

The stag, roused from his lair, shakes his dappled sides; tosses his beamy head; and, conscious of superior agility, seems to defy the gathering storm.—You see, speaking of poetry, I have catched something of the poetical strain.

Asp. This enlivened manner excites my eagerness, and makes me more desirous to hear the sequel.

Ther. First, he has recourse to stratagem, and evasive shifts. He plunges into the copse; darts across the glade; and wheels about in doubling mazes; as though he would pursue, even the foe he avoids. The full-mouthed pack unravel all his winding, and drive him from his wily arts.

Now he betakes himself to flight, and confides in his speed. He bursts through the woods; bounds over the lawns; and leaves the lagging beagles far behind.

kind. The beagles flow, but sure, trace his steps, through woods, through lawns, through half the extended forest. Unwearied, still unwearied, they urge their ardent way, and gain upon the alarmed object of their pursuit.

Again he flies; flies with redoubled swiftness, shoots down the steep; strains up the hill; and takes shelter in the inmost recess of some sequestered grove. The sagacious hounds hang, with greedy nostrils, on the scent. They recover, by indefatigable assiduity, the ground they had lost. Up they come a third time; and, joining in a general peal of vengeance, hurry the affrighted animal from his short concealment.

Perplexed, and in the utmost distress, he seeks the numerous herd. He would lose himself, and elude his pursuers, amidst the multitudes of his fellows. But they, unconcerned for a brother's wo, shun the miserable creature, or expel him from the selfish circle.—Abandoned by his associates, and haunted with apprehensions of approaching ruin, he trembles at every leaf that shakes. He starts; he springs; and wild and swift as the wind, flies he knows not where, yet pours all his soul in flight.—Vain, vain are his efforts. The horrid cry, lately lessened, thickens upon the gale, and thunders in his ear.—Now the poor breathless victim is full in view. His sprightliness forsakes him. His agility is spent. See! how he toils in yonder valley, with faltering limbs, and a hobbling gait. The sight of their game, quickens the pace, and whets the ardour of the impetuous hounds. With tumultuous violence they rush in, and with clamorous joy demand their prey.

What can he do, surrounded as he is, with insulting tongues, and ravenous jaws? Despair is capable of inspiriting even the timorous breast. Having nothing to hope, he forgets to fear. He faces about, and makes a resolute stand. The trunk of a sturdy tree covers his rear; and his own branching horns,

defend him in front. He rushes upon his adversaries; goars some; lays others grovelling on the turf; and makes the whole coward pack give way.

Encouraged by this unexpected success, his hopes revive. He rallies once again his drooping spirits; exerts the little remainder of his strength; and springs through the midst of the retiring rout.—It is his last, last chance. He stretches every nerve; once more loses sight of the rabble from the kennel; and, finding no security on the land, takes to the water. He throws his burning sides into the river; sails down the cooling stream; and slinks away to the verge of some little shelving island.—There, finding a resting-place for his feet, he skulks close to the shady margin. All immersed in the wave, excepting only his nostrils, he baffles, for a while, the prying eye of man, and the keener smell of brute.

Discovered, at length, and forced to quit this unavailing refuge, he climbs the slippery bank. Unable to fly any longer, he stands at bay against an aged willow; stands, all faint with toil, and sobbing with anguish. The crouds that gather round him, with mercileſs and outrageous transport, triumph in his misery. A multitude of blood-thirsty throats, joined with the sonorous horn, ring his funeral knell.—The tears, till this fatal instant unknown, gush from his languishing eyes, and roll down his reeking cheeks. He casts one more look on the woods, the lawns, the pleasing scenes of his former delights; and, determined to die, prepares to sell his life as dear as possible.

At this most critical juncture, the *royal* sportsman comes up. He sees the distressed creature; and, as soon as he sees, he pities. The clemency, which attends the throne, accompanies even the diversions of majesty. He issues the high command. The prohibitory signal is given. The pack, though raving for blood, are checked in a moment; and not checked only, but called off from the prey. Disappointed and grumbling,

grumbling, they retire; and leave the intended victim of their fury, to enjoy his liberty, his safety, and his ease again.

I have now followed the stag, till I have tired your patience. Why did you suffer me to run on at this extravagant rate? You know, I am, on these favourite topics, an everlasting talker.

Asp. Why this apology, *Theron?* I am sure you did not see my mouth yawn, or my head nod, while you was pursuing your subject. Besides, I intend to make reprizals, and put *your* attention to the same trial.

Thus the strictness of the *law* pursues the soul; dislodges it from every refuge of lies; and never remits its terrifying menaces, till the poor delinquent ceases from self-confidence, and fixes on *CHRIST* for his whole salvation *.

The man, perhaps, is awakened into a serious concern for his eternal state. In consequence of which, he relinquishes his profane and iniquitous practices; breaks the Sabbath, and defrauds his neighbour no more.—But the law quickly represents, and in a glaring light, that a *negative* obedience is by no means sufficient.

Upon this, he betakes himself to a course of *positive* holiness; gets acquainted with religious people, and performs religious duties; prays in secret, and attends public ordinances; conscientiously observes the LORD's day, and regulates his behaviour by the rule of GOD's commandments. Now he is ready to congratulate himself on his remarkable and hopeful reformation.

Soon

* *Lex hominem urget, donec is ad* CHRISTUM *confugit. Tum ipsa dicit, Asylum es nactus; desino te persequi; sapis, salvus es.* That is; The *law* urges and pursues the *sinner*, till he flies for refuge to *JESUS CHRIST.* Then the law speaks to this effect; "You are entered into the *strong-hold;* my demands are satisfied; my curses are silenced; I remit the "pursuit. You are wise; you are safe; you are happy."

BENGEL.

Soon he perceives, that all his proficiency is but skin-deep; a mere *outside* varnish, which has not penetrated the inner man. He begins, therefore, to watch over the motions, and bewail the evils of his heart. He labours to subdue pride, and curb passion; to purge out filthy lusts, and to banish spiritual wickedness. Notwithstanding all his vigilance, conscience flies in his face, either for the neglect of some virtue, or the commission of some sin. The law rings in his ear that dreadful denunciation; "Cursed is he that "performeth not *all* things."

Struck by this conviction, his wounds bleed afresh. He is obliged to seek some new balm for his sore. In order to appease an offended GOD, and atone for his sinful relapses, he makes many sorrowful confessions; possibly, submits to voluntary sufferings. He denies himself, and bestows liberally on the poor. He sighs deeply, and mourns bitterly.—But can waters that are muddy, cleanse the garment that is filthy? Wilt thou satisfy, O vain man, wilt thou satisfy for one sin, by committing another? In *these* penitential exercises, were thy thoughts steadily devout? In *those* acts of beneficence, was thy heart warmly affectionate? If not, such fancied reparations of past faults, only aggravate the heavy score.

What shall he do? He cannot *pay*. To *beg* he is ashamed. Fain would he enter into life, yet not be too much indebted to grace. He attempts therefore to *compound* with heaven. He binds himself by solemn, perhaps by sacramental engagements, to use greater circumspection for the future: then turns his eye to the divine MEDIATOR; not with a view of relying wholly on his righteousness; but only to obtain such a supply, as may make up the deficiencies of his own.—Somewhat like this was the mistake of the *Galatian* converts; against which St *Paul*, in his epistle to that people, so solidly disputes, and so sharply inveighs *. For

* *Sharply* indeed! for, instead of saluting them, under the honourable

For a while, he holds fast his purposed integrity. At length, falling notoriously short in executing his part, a startling voice sounds in his ear that dreadful alarm; "Cursed is he that *continueth* not." His heart sinks with discouragement, and all his resolutions hang their enfeebled heads. He has tried every method that he can devise; and has found every method ineffectual. All his expedients are a spider's web, and his hope is as the giving up of the ghost.

His soul, pursued by the law, and hunted by terror, is brought to the gates of death, or the very brink of despair. And now the KING of kings, now the LORD our righteousness, appears for his rescue. Now is accomplished that gracious declaration, *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help* *.—Driven from every false refuge, and drawn by the blessed SPIRIT, he comes weary and heavy leaden to *CHRIST*. Convinced of the sin of his nature, the sin of his life, and the sin of his best duties, he renounces himself in every view. This is all his salvation, and all his desire, that he may win *CHRIST*, and be found in him. Did that poor afflicted woman say, *If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole?* With equal ardour does this enlightened sinner cry, "If I may but have fellowship with the glorious EMMANUEL, in his merits and in his benefits, I "am alive from the dead; I am happy for ever."

Having seen a glimpse of the transcendent excellency of the REDEEMER's person; having received a taste from the inexhaustible fulness of his grace; O! how he longs for brighter manifestations! how he thirsts after more plentiful draughts!—None that come to

honourable title of *saints, and faithful in CHRIST JESUS*, he stigmatizes them with that severe appellation, *O foolish Galatians!*—And as to their practice, which was a departure from justification by *CHRIST alone*, he styles it, not merely an error, but an error of the most mischievous and horrid kind,—*an infatuation*,—*a bewitchery*, τις εβασκανε, Gal. iii. 1.

* Hos. xiii. 9.

to *CHRIST*, are cast out. He that awakens these ardent desires, in his due time gives the desired blessings. After various conflicts, a comfortable and established faith is wrought in the penitent's soul. He believes, that the SON of the MOST HIGH died in *his* stead, and was obedient for *his* justification; believes that all the unsearchable riches of the adored MEDIATOR's life and death are his portion *.

By this faith, his heart is purified; his heart is quickened; he is fitted for every good work.—Tho' temptations assault him, he derives strength from his SAVIOUR; resists the devil; and is faithful unto death.—Though corruptions defile him, he flies to the *fountain opened for uncleanness* †; makes daily; hourly application of the blood of sprinkling; and goes on his way, rejoicing in GOD his SAVIOUR.

Ther. Your discourse puts me in mind of *Absalom's* procedure, when *Joab* refused to make him a visit. The prince ordered his servants to set on fire the general's standing corn ‡. This stratagem had its intended effect. The apprehension of danger *drove* him, when the respectful invitation would not *lead* him, to a personal interview. You seem to suppose, that the law was delivered with such a design; to lay us under a *necessity* of flying to the atonement of *CHRIST*.

Asp.

* See this work of grace, and procedure of conversion, more copiously displayed, in a valuable little piece, entitled, *Human nature in its fourfold state*, by Mr *Thomas Boston*, page 227.—Which, in my opinion, is one of our best books for common readers. The sentences are short, and the comparisons striking. The language is easy, and the doctrine evangelical. The method proper, the plan comprehensive, the manner searching, yet consolitary.—If another celebrated treatise is styled *The whole duty of man*, I would call this *The* WHOLE *of man*; as it comprises—what he *was* originally—what he *is* by transgression—what he *should be* through grace—and then what he *will be* in glory.

† Zech. xiii. 1. ‡ 2 Sam. xiv. 30.

Asp. I do, *Theron.* And for this opinion I have a far better authority than my own suppoſition. We are aſſured by unerring wiſdom, that *CHRIST is the end of the law* *. It points invariably to him. It terminates wholly in him; and *then* obtains its firſt, its principal purpoſe, when ſinners are brought to their divine REDEEMER, for righteouſneſs and ſtrength; for that *righteouſneſs*, which entitles to heaven; that *ſtrength*, which capacitates for obedience.

The law hath concluded all mankind *under ſin* †: yet not with an intention, that any ſhould be diſcouraged now, or periſh for ever; but that every one may ſee his inexpreſſible need of a SAVIOUR's death, and a SAVIOUR's obedience ‡: that, being thus prepared,

* Rom. x. 4.

† *Gal.* iii. 10. The ſacred original is ſomewhat more comprehenſive than *Aſpaſio*'s interpretation. It is not πάντας, but πάντα. Which denotes *things* as well as *perſons*; and implies that nothing we *have*, nothing we *do*, is free from ſin, till the merits of *CHRIST* intervene, and the blood of *CHRIST* be ſprinkled.

‡ *Witſius* ſpeaking of the law delivered at *Sinai*, ſays, *Facta eſt iſta fœderis operum commemoratio, ad Iſraelitas peccatorum et miſeriæ ſuæ convincendos, ex ſeipſis expellendos, de neceſſitate ſatisfactionis edocendos, et ad CHRISTUM compellendos; et ſic inſervit fœderi gratiæ.* Animadv. IREN. p. 99.

The *genius* and *deſign* of the law were, I think, emblematically taught by the circumſtances attending its *delivery*.—The mountain, not to be trodden by any *Iſraelite*, or touched by any beaſt, on pain of death—The voice of thunder, and the glare of lightning.—The ſound of the trumpet, and the clouds of ſmoke—The vaſt range of hills and rocks, trembling to their centre—Six hundred thouſand men ſtruck with inexpreſſible conſternation—And *Moſes*, even *Moſes* himſelf, the favourite of heaven, terrified exceedingly—All theſe indicated the *righteous*, the *rigorous*, and the *awful* import of "the word "ſpoken."

Nor was the *effect* of theſe aſtoniſhing incidents, without a ſpiritual meaning. The people durſt not adventure upon a *perſonal* approach, but had recourſe to a *mediator*. They re-

prepared, both to value and receive so precious a blessing, *the promise* of justification *by faith in JESUS CHRIST, may be given to them that believe.*

Let us advert to this grand aim of the law. Then we shall see goodness, unquestionable and sovereign goodness, in forming its constitution so *sublimely perfect*, and making its threatenings so *inflexibly severe*. Exclusive of this wholesome severity, we should supinely disesteem, perhaps wantonly reject, the grace of the gospel.—The *prodigal son* would never have returned to his father, in that humble, submissive, supplicating posture, if he had not found his circumstances utterly ruined, and felt himself perishing with hunger. No more would the conceited sons of *Adam*, disclaiming all pretence to any merit of their own, and with nothing but the halter * of self condemnation about their necks, fall down at the feet of a merciful REDEEMER, if they were not instigated by the sharp goad, or rather driven by the flaming sword of the law.

Ther. Has the law then nothing to do with our temper and conversation? Is it no longer to be considered as a system of duties? no longer to be regarded as a rule of life?

Asp. When it has forced the lines of self-righteousness, and driven us to *JESUS CHRIST*, that only citadel of safety, for acceptance and salvation; *then* it serves as a rule for our conduct. *Then* it shews us, like

quested, that *Moses* might interpose, and transact affairs between the terrible JEHOVAH, and the guilty congregation.—Such an impression, the purity and the rigour of the law should make on our hearts; should drive us from self to a SAVIOUR, deter us from confiding in our *legal*, and prompt us to seek an *evangelical* righteousness.

* Alluding to those remarkable words of *Benhadad's* servants: *Let us put sackcloth upon our loins*, and ropes upon our heads, *and go out to meet the king of Israel; peradventure he will save thy life*, 1 Kings xx. 31.

like a friend and a guide, how to order our converſation, and adorn our profeſſion; how to glorify GOD, and expreſs our gratitude to *CHRIST*. But, till it has accompliſhed the forementioned end, it thunders vengeance; it flaſhes terror; it is, as *Moſes* ſpeaks, *a fiery law* *.

And is it, my dear *Theron*, a fiery law? Then let it conſtrain us to take ſhelter in that meritorious obedience, which will be to our guilty ſouls *as the cold of ſnow in the time of harveſt* †.—Is it a law which *worketh wrath?* Let it endear to our affections that ineſtimably-precious goſpel, which *preacheth peace by JESUS CHRIST* ‡.—Is it *the miniſtration of condemnation* ‖? O! let it quicken our flight to that all-gracious SURETY, who was condemned at *Pilate*'s bar, that we may be acquitted at GOD's tribunal.

To all this agrees our celebrated *Milton*; whoſe divinity is as faultleſs, as his poetry is matchleſs. You will give me leave to quote a few of his beautiful lines: which *recapitulate*, as it were, the whole preceeding converſation; and, while they recapitulate the converſation, *confirm* the doctrine. This will make you ſome amends, for my late tedious harangue. This will tip the lead with gold.

So law appears imperfect; and but giv'n
With purpoſe to reſign them, in full time,
Up to a better cov'nant; diſciplin'd
From ſhadowy types to truth; from fleſh to ſpirit;
From impoſition of ſtrict laws, to free
Acceptance of large grace; from ſervile fear,
To filial; works of law, to works of faith §.

* *Fiery law*, Deut. xxxiii. 2. I dare not affirm, that this is the exact import of the original, nor do I preſume to determine the preciſe ſignification of a phraſe ſo remarkably difficult. But as this is our received verſion; as it ſuggeſts a very *uſeful* truth; and a truth, which, in the preſent age, is peculiarly *needful* to be inculcated; I am inclined to acquieſce in the common rendering.

† Prov. xxv. 13. ‡ Acts x. 36. ‖ 2 Cor. iii. 19. § B. XII. 300.

DIALOGUE X.

Asp. AGAIN, *Theron!* must we never lay aside the weapons of controversy?—You put me in mind of the resolute *Athenian;* who having fought with distinguished bravery on the field of *Marathon*, pursued the vanquished *Persians* to their fleet. At that very instant, a galley full of the enemies troops was putting off to sea. Determined, if possible, to prevent their escape, he laid hold on the vessel with his right hand; which was no sooner fixed, than chopped off by the sailors. The warrior, not at all discouraged, seized it with his left. When that also was cut away, he fastened his teeth in its side; and never quitted his gripe, till he resigned his breath *.

Ther. I have been reconsidering the case of *imputed righteousness;* and am by no means satisfied, as to the propriety of the phrase, or the truth of the doctrine, especially in the sense which you espouse.—Objections arise, more substantial and weighty, than any that have hitherto been urged; and which, if I mistake not, you will find it a more difficult task to answer.

Asp. I must do my best. And if my best attempts prove unsuccessful, I shall say with the gallant *Iphicrates*, when overpowered by the eloquence of his antagonist; "My adversary is the better actor, but mine "is the better play."

I say *better*—For to you, *Theron*, I will freely own, what to another person I should not be so willing to disclose, That I receive no comfort, but from the habitual

* The *Athenian's* name was *Cynægyrus.* The author who relates this extraordinary story, is *Justin.* If the reader should think it a *rhodomontade*, I believe, he will not judge amiss. And I promise myself, the same good sense will enable him to distinguish between what is *hinted* by way of *pleasantry*, and what is *urged* by way of *argument.*

bitual belief, and daily application of this precious doctrine.—Whenever I read the moſt *correct* and *beautiful* writings, that proceed in the contrary ſtrain, I feel my ſpirits heavy; I find my proſpects gloomy; and not one ray of conſolation gleams upon my mind. Whereas *much meaner* compoſitions, which breathe the ſavour of this evangelical unction, ſeldom fail to quicken my hopes; to brighten my views; and put into my mouth that piouſly-alert profeſſion of the Pſalmiſt, *I will run the way of thy commandments, now thou haſt ſet my heart at liberty* *.—Tho' I am far from laying any conſiderable ſtreſs upon this obſervation, farther ſtill from advancing it into the place of an argument; yet I may be permitted to mention it, in the confidence and familiarity of friendſhip.

Ther. An opinion propoſed with ſo much modeſty, and ſo nearly connected with my *Aſpaſio*'s comfort, has doubtleſs a claim to my ſerious attention. Otherwiſe, it might poſſibly provoke my raillery. For, you muſt know, I am no great admirer of inward feelings. I cannot think them a very ſolid method of demonſtrating your point. It muſt be enforced by better reaſons, if you would gain it acceſs to *my* heart.

We muſt place, you ſay, a dependence upon the *LORD JESUS CHRIST*, in all that he has *done* and *ſuffered*. What HE has done and ſuffered, you add, is our only juſtifying righteouſneſs; and to place our dependence on it, is the only method to obtain pardon of our ſins, and life eternal.

Aſp. I have ſaid it, *Theron*, and I abide by it. This being the righteouſneſs of GOD, is—

Ther. Give me leave, before you proceed farther, to propoſe a query. Does the righteouſneſs of GOD ſignify the active and paſſive obedience of *CHRIST?*

Aſp. Righteouſneſs is a conformity to the law, in heart, and in life. As the SON of GOD voluntarily made himſelf ſubject to the law; perfectly fulfilled its

* Pſal. cxix. 32.

its precepts; and suffered to the utmost its penalty; this, I should imagine, furnishes us with the *truest* and *noblest* signification of the phrase.

Ther. What, if I or others should imagine quite the reverse?

Asp. I thank my friend for his admonition. It is indeed unreasonable, that *my bare* imagination should pass for orthodoxy and truth. Let us then inquire after better proof.

When the divine name, in the sacred phraseology, is added to a substantive, it expresses some very extraordinary property.—*The trees of the LORD* †, denote those stately and magnificent forests, which the hand of the MOST HIGH planted.—*The mountains of GOD* ‡, are those prodigiously-large elevations of the earth, which none but an almighty arm could establish.—The righteousness of GOD likewise means, a righteousness of the *most supereminent* dignity; such as is worthy to be called by his name; and may justly challenge his acceptance. And where shall we find this, but in the conduct and person of his blessed SON?—This has a most unexceptionable claim to the exalted title; being, as a masterly critic explains the phrase, "a righteousness devised by GOD the FA-"THER, from all eternity; wrought out by GOD "the SON, in the person of *JESUS CHRIST*; "applied by GOD the HOLY GHOST, to the sin-"ner's soul."

Ther. This doctrine of yours, if I rightly understand it, would make remission of sins but one *half* of our justification; and something else necessary, in order to obtain eternal life. Which is just as rational, as to suppose, that tho' one cause may expel darkness, another must supervene, in order to introduce light.

Asp. The nature of justification and the nature of condemnation,

* Psal. civ. 16.

† This is the import of the original, ארזי אלהים *Psal.* xxxvi. *ver.* 7. *Heb.* ver. 6. *Eng.*

condemnation, are two *oppoſites*, which will mutually illuſtrate each other.—What is implied in the condemnation of a ſinner? He forfeits eternal life, and is doomed to eternal death.—What is included in the juſtification of a ſinner? It ſuperſedes his obligation to puniſhment, and inveſts him with a title to happineſs.—In order to the *firſt*, there muſt be a remiſſion of ſins; in order to the *ſecond*, an imputation of righteouſneſs. *Both* which are derived from *CHRIST*'s mediation in our behalf; and *both* take place, when we are united to that divine HEAD.—So that we do not derive them from two different ſources, but aſcribe them to one and the ſame great, all-ſufficient CAUSE.

Your compariſon, though intended to overthrow, I think, fully eſtabliſhes the ſentiment.—When yonder bright orb makes his firſt appearance in the eaſt, what effects are produced? The ſhades of night are diſperſed, and the light of day is diffuſed.—To what are they owing? Each to a ſeparate, or both to the ſame origin? Every one's experience will anſwer the queſtion. Thus when the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* ariſes in the ſoul, he brings *at once* pardon and acceptance. Remiſſion and ſalvation are under his wings. Both which conſtitute the *healing* * of the nations; and both owe their being to *CHRIST*'s obedience, embraced as active, and not rejected as paſſive.

Ther. This, I know, is the fine-ſpun theory of your ſyſtematic divines. But where is their *warrant* from ſcripture? By what authority do they introduce ſuch ſubtile diſtinctions?

Aſp. I cannot think the diſtinction ſo ſubtile, or the theory ſo finely ſpun. To be releaſed from the *damnatory* ſentence, is one thing; to be treated as a *righteous* perſon, is evidently another.—*Abſalom* was pardoned, when he received a permiſſion to remove from *Geſhur*,

* Mal. iv. 2.

Geſhur, and dwell at *Jeruſalem*. But this was very different from the recommencement of filial duty, and parental endearment *. A rebel may be *exempted* from the capital puniſhment which his traiterous practices deſerve; without being *reſtored* to the dignity of his former ſtate, or the rights of a loyal ſubject. In *Chriſtianity* likewiſe, to be freed from the charge of guilt, and to be regarded as a righteous perſon, are two ſeveral bleſſings; really diſtinct in themſelves, and often diſtinguiſhed in ſcripture.

Ther. Where are they diſtinguiſhed? in what texts of ſcripture? This is what I called for—your ſcriptural warrant.

Aſp. What think you of *Job*'s reply to his cenſorious friends? *GOD forbid, that I ſhould juſtify you* †! That he *forgave* them, there is no doubt. Yet he could not juſtify them; could not allow their reflections to be equitable, or their behaviour charitable.

What think you of *Solomon*'s ſupplication? *Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy ſervants; condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and juſtifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteouſneſs* ‡. To condemn, in this paſſage, evidently ſignifies to pronounce guilty, and obnoxious to puniſhment. By parity of reaſon, to *juſtify* muſt denote to pronounce righteous, and entitled to happineſs.

What ſays *Solomon*'s father? *Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant, O LORD! For in thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified* ||. A man might be *pardoned*, if judged according to the tenor of his own obedience. But no man could be *declared righteous*, in conſequence of ſuch a trial: this were abſolutely and univerſally impoſſible.

From

* 2 Sam. xiv. 24.

† *Job* xxvii. 5. *Vos juſtos in cauſa veſtra adverſus me pronunciem.* SCAULT.

‡ 1 Kings viii. 32. || Pſal. cxliii. 2.

From all which passages I conclude, that to be justified, is different from, is superior to, the bare remission of sin.

Ther. All these instances are derived from the *Old* Testament: the *New*, if I mistake not, speaks another language. Consider the case of the penitent *publican*. What does he request? *GOD be merciful to me a sinner!* What does he obtain? *He went down to his house justified* *. If then the petition and the grant may be deemed correspondent, pardon and justification must be reckoned equivalent.

Asp. The Old and the New Testament are, in their style and contents, exactly correspondent. *Echo*, in yonder cloysters, does not more punctually reverberate the speaker's voice, than those divine books harmonize with each other.

Yet it will not follow, from the *publican*'s request and the *publican*'s blessing, that pardon and justification are the same. Only, that GOD's bounty frequently *exceeds* our prayers, and is larger than our expectations; or, that the blessing which was implored, and the blessing which was vouchsafed, are *inseparably* connected, and always accompany each other.

St *Paul* mentions *a justification of life:* not barely an exemption from the sentence of death; but such a justification, as gives *a title* † to the reward of life. The words are very emphatical. We shall injure the dignity of their meaning, if we understand them in a more contracted sense.—Towards the close of the same chapter, we have another passage rich with consolation, and full to our purpose: *Grace reigneth through righteousness unto eternal life* ‡: Here is pointed out the *prime source* of all our blessings, infinitely-free and triumphant grace: the *meritorious cause*, not any works of man, not any qualifications of our own, but

* Luke xviii. 13. 14.

† *Rom.* v. 18. Δικαιωσις ζωης *est declaratio divina illa, qua peccator, mortis reus,* vitæ *adjudicatur, idque* jure. BENGEL. in loc.

‡ Rom v. 21.

but the perfect righteousness of our *LORD JESUS CHRIST:* the *effect* or *end* of all; which is, not barely an absolution from guilt, but an instatement in life; a life of holy communion with GOD in this world, to be crowned with an eternal fruition of him in another *.

Let me produce one text more, which just at this instant occurs to my memory. You will find it in the apostle's defence of himself, before *Festus* and *Agrippa*. He opens, as it were, his apostolical commission, and repeats the words of his royal MASTER. *I send thee to* ignorant and enslaved, guilty and ruined creatures; *to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto GOD; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among all them which are sanctified by faith that is in me* †. The great PREACHER of the *Gentiles*, or rather the supreme LORD of all preachers, has distinguished between *remission of sins* and the *inheritance of saints;* between the *pardon* that delivers from hell, and the *justification* that entitles to heaven. So that the former does by no means constitute the latter; but is connected with it, as a link in the same sacred chain; or included in it, as part of the same glorious whole.

Ther. Admitting your distinction to be proper, is not the satisfaction made by the death of *CHRIST*, sufficient of *itself* to obtain, both our full pardon, and our final happiness?

Asp. Since my friend has started the question, I may venture, with all reverence to the divine counsels, to answer in the negative; it being necessary, that the REDEEMER of men should *obey*, as well as *suffer*, in their stead.—For this we have the testimony of our LORD himself. *This commandment*, says he, *I have received of my FATHER, that I should lay down my life*

* Accordingly, eternal life is called *the hope*, not of forgiveness, but *of righteousness*, Gal. v. 5. And it is bestowed, not barely because of absolution, but *because of righteousness*, Rom viii. 10.

† Acts xxvi. 18.

life *. *Thus it becometh us*, adds he in another place, *to fulfil all righteousness* †. To which his apostle subjoins, that, if we *reign in life*, it must be not only thro' those sufferings which expiate, but also *through* that *righteousness* ‡ which merits.

Ther. Our LORD's testimony relates only to a *positive* institution, and is quite foreign to our purpose. —I have often been disgusted at such strained applications of scripture. The partizans of a system wrest the sacred book. They deal with divine truth, as the tyrant *Procrustes* served those unhappy creatures, who fell into his merciless hands. Is a text too short, to suit their design? Our *Procrustean* expositors can stretch it on the rack, and lengthen its sense. Is it too full, to consist with their scheme? They can lop off a limb, secrete a sentence, or contract the meaning.—Is this to reverence the great GOD? Is this to treat respectfully his holy word?

Asp. I have been grieved, I assure you, and disgusted at this practice, as well as yourself. A practice, not only very irreverent, but very injudicious also. It really prejudises the cause it would unfairly recommend. Such a support is like *a broken tooth, or a foot out of joint* ‖; not only unserviceable, but hurtful; an obstruction, rather than a furtherance.—However, I am not conscious of committing any violence on this passage, or of forcing it into my service. The circumstance you object, rather strengthens than invalidates the conclusion. If it was so requisite for our blessed MEDIATOR to observe a *positive* institution, how much more necessary to fulfil those *moral* precepts, whose obligation is unalterable and everlasting?

Besides, it should be considered, whether *CHRIST*'s sufferings were a complete satisfaction to the law? Complete they were, with regard to the *penalty*, not with regard to the *precept*. A distinction obvious and

 important,

* John x. 18. † Matth. iii. 15.
‡ Rom. v. 17. ‖ Prov. xxv. 19.

important. From whence arises the following argument; which, for once, you will allow me to propose in the *logical form*.

By what alone the law was not satisfied, by that alone sinners could not be justified.

By *CHRIST*'s sufferings alone, the law was not satisfied:

Therefore by *CHRIST*'s sufferings alone, sinners could not be justified.

But when we join the active with the passive obedience of our LORD; the efficacy of the one, with the perfection of the other; how does our justification stand firm, in the *fullest* sense of the word! We have *all* that the law demands, both for our exemption from the curse, and as a title to the blessing.

Ther. Does not the scripture ascribe the *whole* of our salvation to the death of *CHRIST?* delivering it, as a never-to-be-forgotten maxim in Christianity, That *we have redemption thro' his blood* *; *are brought near through the blood of CHRIST* †; nay, that *we are justified* (the very point under debate) *thro' his blood* ‡.—Would the inspired writer have assigned these various blessings to this *one* cause, if it had been a price inadequate to the purchase, or a means insufficient to accomplish the end?

Asp. This *part* of our LORD's meritorious humiliation is, by a very usual figure, put for the *whole*. The death of *CHRIST* includes, not only his sufferings, but his obedience. The shedding of his precious blood, was at once the grand instance of his suffering, and the finishing act of his obedience. In this view it is considered, and thus it is interpreted, by his own ambassador; who, speaking of his divine MASTER, says, *He was* obedient *unto death, even the death of the cross* ||.

By the same figure, faith is sometimes said to be a lively influential persuasion, *That CHRIST died for our*

* Eph. i. 7. † Eph. ii. 13. ‡ Rom. v. 9. || Phil. ii. 8.

our ſins *. At other times, it is repreſented as a firm practical belief, that *GOD hath raiſed him from the dead* †. Neither of which can, without the utmoſt contrariety to the analogy of ſcripture, be taken in the *excluſive* ſenſe. Each act muſt be underſtood, not ſeparately, but jointly; each as implying both, or reciprocally inferring one another.

In like manner, when the ſcripture aſcribes our juſtification to the death of *CHRIST*, we are not to think, that it would *ſet aſide*, but *imply* his obedience, It is not becauſe his active obedience has no concern in procuring the bleſſing; but becauſe his bitter paſſion was the moſt conſpicuous, and the completing ſtage of his ever-glorious undertaking. Then, and not till then, he could truly ſay, *FATHER, I have finiſhed the work thou gaveſt me to do* ‡.

Ther. According to your account then, it ſhould be poſſible for a man to have all his ſins done away, yet not attain to *complete* juſtification. Which is as contrary to ſound ſenſe, and true divinity, as to imagine, that crookedneſs may be removed, and the object not become ſtraight.

Aſp. No, *Theron.* According to my account, it is impoſſible, that the active and paſſive obedience of our REDEEMER ſhould be disjoined. To whomſoever the one is imputed, from him the other is not with-held. They were *undivided in CHRIST* the illuſtrious head, and they are *undivided* in their application to his myſtical body. As *CHRIST* in ſuffering obeyed, and in obeying ſuffered; ſo whoever receives *CHRIST* as an atonement, receives him alſo as a righteouſneſs.

This has been obſerved before; and if this be real fact, what an *ineſtimably-precious* gift is the gift of *CHRIST!* Never was the moſt ſovereign remedy ſo admirably ſuited to any malady, as this is adapted to all our wants. In HIM may we be found, living and

* 1 Cor. xv. 3. † Rom. x. 9. ‡ John xvii. 4.

and dying! How safe, how happy then!—Let me not weary your patience, if I repeat a passage from our excellent Dr *Lightfoot:* which, though artless and remarkably simple, has very much affected my mind; and, I hope, will leave some valuable impression on my friend's. "Justification," says that judicious divine, "is a man's being interested in all *CHRIST*'s "righteousness. And if any thing is to be longed "for, sure that is, to be interested in *all CHRIST*'s "righteousness."

Ther. You don't weary my patience; neither do you satisfy my doubts. For you take no notice of the *absurdity* objected, and the comparison that enforces it.

Asp. Your comparison, my dear friend, is not founded on a *parallel* case. Neither sense, nor philosophy find a medium between the removal of crookedness, and the succession of straightness. But reason discerns an *apparent*, and revelation maintains an *important* difference, between the pardon of guilt, and a title to life. This has already been proved from scripture; and is, to me at least, evident from the very nature of things. For, if a king, in favour of some condemned malefactor, revoke the sentence of death; this is one very considerable act of clemency. But if he pleases to make the pardoned criminal, a *partaker* of his kingdom, or an heir of his crown; this surely is a new, and a much higher instance of royal bounty.

If you insist upon a *similitude*, the word of GOD, which always speaks with consummate propriety, will furnish us with one. *Zechariah* illustrates the doctrine of justification. He represents the sinner by a person arrayed in *filthy garments*. His pardon is described by *taking away* this sordid apparel. By which benefit, he ceases to be defiled; yet is he not hereby clothed; yet is he not hereby justified. This is an additional blessing; signified by putting on *change of raiment* *, and wearing beautiful robes. Here the circumstances tally.

The

* Zech. iii. 3, 4, 5.

The two conſtituent parts of juſtification, are ſeverally diſplayed, and ſtrongly marked. Here we have the removal of filth, and the robe of righteouſneſs; that which frees us from being abhorred, and that which renders us accepted: which, though diſtinguiſhable in themſelves, and diſtinguiſhed by the ſacred writer, are always united in the divine donation.

Ther. This notion is founded on a *chimerical* covenant, that *CHRIST* would take upon him the obedience due from man, of which there is not the leaſt intimation in holy ſcripture.

Aſp. That *CHRIST* undertook every thing neceſſary to redeem *loſt ſinners* from guilt and condemnation, every thing neceſſary to procure for *attainted rebels* a freſh title to life and glory; this cannot be reckoned chimerical. This muſt be as real, as that loſt ſinners are redeemed, or attainted rebels reſtored. Every proof of the one, proves and eſtabliſhes the other. This is what we call a *covenant;* and, from its benign nature, THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

Without *undertaking* this, I ſee not how our LORD could ſuſtain the character of a SURETY; nor, without *fulfilling* it, how he could execute the office of a REDEEMER.—And I believe, you yourſelf will be at a loſs to ſhew, with what kind of juſtice the eternal FATHER could *lay* * our iniquities on the innocent *JESUS*, unleſs he had *conſented* to be anſwerable for our guilt.

Ther. This is no anſwer to my objection. I ſaid, and it has been aſſerted by a very eminent and able pen,—that there is no intimation of any ſuch covenant in the whole ſcriptures.

Aſp. What then can be the meaning of thoſe remarkable words in the prophecy of *Zechariah? The counſel of peace ſhall be between them both* †. Here, I think,

* Iſ. liii. 6.

† *Zech.* iv. 12, 13. Theſe two verſes contain a brief, but very

think, the covenant is mentioned, and the parties are specified.—*The counsel of peace*, if I mistake not, signifies the mysterious and unsearchable contrivance, formed for the recovery of ruined man:—formed and carried into execution by the LORD almighty, or GOD the FATHER; and that illustrious person, who is to *build the temple and bear the glory*. A character, which none can claim; a task, to which none is equal; but the blessed *JESUS* only.

In very fine description of the REDEEMER; of his person, his office, and his glory; together with the all-gracious cause, and ever-blessed fruit of our redemption.

His *person:* He is *the man;* or, as the *Hebrew* imports, the *real*, but at the same time, the *illustrious* man.—*Whose name is the BRANCH;* being the new origin of a new race; the father of a spiritual seed, who are children, not of the flesh, but of the promise.—A branch that shall spring, not from a common root, not from any human planting, but ממתחיו *from under himself;* being born of a pure virgin, and by the power of his own SPIRIT, he shall be both stock and stem to himself.

His *office:* It is to *build the temple*, the church of the elect; which is the house of the living GOD; in which he dwells, and by whom he is worshipped; laying the foundation of this spiritual edifice in his cross, and cementing it with his blood.—Which he shall rule as a *king*, after having redeemed it as a *priest;* uniting the sacerdotal censer with the regal diadem, and being *a priest upon his throne*. Hence proceeds his *glory:* for he *stands* not, like other priests, offering daily the same oblations; but having, by one sacrifice, obtained eternal redemption for us, is *set* down at the right hand of the MAJESTY on high.

What is the *cause* of these great events? What, but that most sacred and august convention, *the counsel of peace?* which was settled *between them both;* between the LORD JEHOVAH on one hand, and the man whose name is the *BRANCH* on the other.—Called a *council*, from the entire consent, which actuated each party; and the transcendent wisdom, displayed in the whole scheme.—The council of *peace*, because of its sovereign efficacy, to make peace with an offended GOD, peace in the accusing conscience, peace among people of jarring tempers and discordant principles.

In *pſalm* the xlth, the *conditions* of the covenant are circumſtantially recorded: which were the incarnation and obedience of the eternal SON: *A body haſt thou prepared me. Lo! I come to do thy will* *. The *accompliſhment* of theſe conditions, is alledged and pleaded by our great MEDIATOR, in the introduction to his laſt ſolemn prayer †. What he implores, in the proceſs of his ſupplications, may be looked upon as the *recompenſe* ‡ decreed him by the FATHER, and ſtipulated in this magnificent treaty. *Implores*, did I ſay? 'Tis very obſervable, that our LORD makes a *demand*, rather than a *requeſt*. The expreſſion is not ερωτω, but θελω ‖: A word of authority, not of ſupplication. He claims what, by the FATHER's engagement, and by his own obedience, was become his unqueſtionable right.

Here are the parties of the covenant; the conditions of the covenant; the performance of the covenant; and the reward, which, by virtue of ſuch performance, is merited, is claimable, is due. All this I ſhould imagine, amounts to an *intimation*, and ſomewhat *more* than an intimation of the covenant.

Ther. This you call the covenant of grace: but if we are juſtified by *CHRIST*'s fulfilling of the law, we are juſtified by works. So that, before you can ſtrike out ſuch a way of ſalvation, you muſt *contradict* yourſelf: and, what is more adventurous, you muſt aboliſh that fundamental principle of the goſpel; *By the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified.*

Aſp. We *are*, I grant it, juſtified by works. But whoſe? The works of *CHRIST*, not our own.—This is very far from contradicting ourſelves; equally far is it from aboliſhing what you call the *goſpel-principle*. Which, tho' an undeniable truth, is not an evangelical

* Heb. x. 5, 7. † John xvii.

‡ This recompenſe is ſpecified and promiſed, in another authentic copy of the ſame grand treaty, recorded, *Iſ.* xlix. 1,—6.

‖ Not I *beg*, but I *will*; John xvii. 24. *Sic volo, ſic jubeo.*

evangelical doctrine: because it only shews us our miserable state, and the utter impossibility of relieving ourselves. Whereas nothing is *genuine* gospel, but what speaks comfort, and administers recovery.

Between the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, this, I apprehend, is the difference: By the former, man was indispensibly bound to obey, in his *own person*. By the latter, the obedience of *his Surety* is accepted, instead of his own. The righteousness required by both, is not *sincere*, but *complete;* not proportioned to the abilities of fallen man, but to the purity of the law, and the majesty of the LAWGIVER. —By this means, the glory of GOD as an awful Sovereign, and the glory of his law as an inviolable system, are entirely preserved and illustriously displayed. The salvation of sinners, neither clashes with the truth, nor interferes with the justice of the Supreme LEGISLATOR. On the contrary, it becomes a *faithful* and *just* * procedure of the most high GOD, to justify *him that believeth on JESUS*.

Ther. When you make this difference between the two covenants, where is your authority from scripture? Which of the sacred writers have taught us, that, tho' one demanded personal, the other is content with *vicarious* obedience?

Asp. Which?—*The first three.* The most eminent historian; the most enraptured poet; and the most zealous preacher. I need not inform you, that I mean *Moses*, *David*, and *Paul*.

The testimony of *David* has been already recited.—*Moses* gives us a concise, but very instructive account of the second covenant. With *whom*, according to his representation, was it made? Not with *Adam*, or any of his posterity; but with the *LORD JESUS CHRIST*, in the room and stead of both. None of the articles are proposed to a poor, impotent, ruined creature; but the whole is consigned over to the interposing

* 1 John i. 9.

posing SAVIOUR, significantly described by *the seed of the woman*. It is not said, "Thy best endeavours, "*O Adam*, thy true repentance and sincere obedience, "shall retrieve this fatal miscarriage; but, *the seed of* "*the woman shall bruise the serpent's head* *: the "SON of the MOST HIGH, by taking thy nature, "submitting to thy obligations, and suffering death "for thy sins, shall fully repair thy loss."

CHRIST, we see, undertook to execute the conditions. *CHRIST* was our representative in this great transaction. For which reason he is styled by St *Paul*, *the second Man* †, *and the Surety of a better covenant* ‡.—Our help being laid upon ONE that is so mighty; upon ONE that is so faithful; the covenant is said to be *in all things well ordered and sure* ‖: admirably well ordered indeed, for the comfort of the *Christian*, and the security of his salvation.—"'Tis "true," may he argue, "I cannot fulfil the conditions; and 'tis equally true, that this is not required "at my hands. The *LORD JESUS CHRIST*, "of his adorably-rich goodness, has performed all "that was conditionary ⊥; and has established, for "me and for his people, a *valid title* to the promises, "the privileges, and—

Ther. "has thereby released me from all obligation "to duty."—Farewell then to our own obedience. No more occasion for any holiness of life. Nay, the

* Gen. iii. 15. † 1 Cor. xv. 48.
‡ Heb. vii. 22. ‖ 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

⊥ *Witsius*, instead of representing the *covenant of grace* as a *chimerical* thing, most affectionately and charmingly displays its excellency: *Si quicquam ergo attentissima consideratione dignum censeri debeat, sane id fœdus gratiæ est. Hic via ostenditur ad meliorem terrestri paradisum, et ad certiorem stabilioremque felicitatem, ea qua Adamus excidit. Hic nova spes perditis mortalibus allucet, quæ eo gratior esse debet, quo inexspectatior obvenit. Hic conditiones offeruntur, quibus æterna salus annexa est; conditiones non o nobis rursus præstandæ, quod animum despondere faceret; sed ab EO, qui vita non excederet, antequam vere dixerit,* Consummatum est.

De Oecon. lib. II. cap. i.

fluice is opened for an inundation of ungodlineſs.—Fine divinity truly! Should I not rather ſay, downright *Antinomianiſm!*

Aſp. No, my friend: *CHRIST came not to deſtroy the law, but to fulfil* *. He has fulfilled it, to the very uttermoſt, in his own perſon. He has alſo merited for us thoſe ſupplies of the SPIRIT, which alone can enable weak corrupt creatures to yield faithful and acceptable obedience.—Though our *LORD JESUS died*, and was obedient *for the ungodly;* though he *finds* us ungodly, when he juſtifies us; yet he never *leaves* his people in this abominable ſtate. On the contrary, he *teaches them to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts* †.

Pray, let us conſider the tenor of this covenant; ſince you are ſo very apprehenſive of its conſequences.—"*I will put my laws into their minds, and on their* "*hearts will I write them* ‡. They ſhall diſcern ſuch "a beauty and glory in my precepts, as will engage "their deſires, and win their affections: ſo that it ſhall "be no longer their *burden*, but their *delight*, even "their meat and drink, to do the will of their FA-"THER in heaven."—This, this is one of the privileges purchaſed by our great MEDIATOR. And it ſeems wondrous ſtrange, that the *purchaſe* of an eſtate for you or me, ſhould be reckoned the ſure means to *deprive* us of the poſſeſſion, or *debar* us from the enjoyment.

How often is this *weak ſurmiſe* urged as an argument? All whoſe plauſibility is owing to a palpable miſtake, or an egregious fallacy; to a ſuppoſed ſeparation of things, which are abſolutely inſeparable; I mean our juſtification and our ſanctification ‖. You are a philoſopher, *Theron*. Try, if you can ſeparate *gravity*

* Matth. v. 17. † Tit. ii. 12. ‡ Heb. viii. 10.

‖ See *Iſ.* xlv. 24. 1 *Cor.* i. 30 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. where theſe bleſſings walk hand in hand; and never *were*, never *will*, never *can* be parted.

gravity from the ſtone, or *heat* from the fire. If theſe bodies and their eſſential properties are indiſſolubly connected; ſo are a genuine faith and a conſcientious obedience. To ſuppoſe them diſunited, is as contrary to *ſound divinity*, as it would be contrary to *true philoſophy*, if you ſhould talk of a burning ſubſtance that has no warmth, or of a ſolid ſubſtance that has no weight.—Never therefore, my dear friend, repeat this ſtale objection; never propagate this ungrounded * clamour; nor adopt a cavil, which is altogether as unphiloſophical, as it is anti-evangelical.

Ther. We digreſs from the point. My principal objection is not ſatisfied. I was obſerving, that, according to *your* manner of ſtating the affair, ſalvation is no longer free, but founded upon works.—They are the works

* This puts me in mind of what *Theodorus* replied to *Philocles*: who was often inſinuating, that he preached *licentious* doctrine; becauſe he enlarged, with peculiar aſſiduity, upon faith in *JESUS CHRIST*; and frequently choſe ſuch texts as, *Believe in the LORD JESUS, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.*

"I preach ſalvation by *JESUS CHRIST*; and give me "leave to aſk, whether you know what ſalvation by *CHRIST* "means?"—*Philocles* paused. He began to bluſh; would have eluded the queſtion, and declined an anſwer.—"No," ſaid *Theodorus*: "you muſt permit me to inſiſt upon a reply. Be"cauſe, if it be a *right* one, it will juſtify me and my conduct: "if it be a *wrong* one, it will prove, that you blame you "know not what; and have more reaſon to inform yourſelf, "than to cenſure others."

This diſconcerted him ſtill more. Upon which *Theodorus* proceeded. "Salvation by *CHRIST* means, not only a "deliverance from the *guilt*, but alſo from the *power* of ſin. "*He gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all i*"*niquity; redeem us from our vain converſation*, as well as de"liver us from wrath to come.—Go now, *Philocles*, and "tell the world, that, by teaching theſe doctrines, I promote "the cauſe of licentiouſneſs. And you will be juſt as *ration*"*al*, juſt as *candid*, juſt as *true*, as if you ſhould affirm, that "the *firemen*, by playing the engine, and pouring in water, "burnt your houſe to the ground, and laid your furniture in "aſhes."

works of the law, though *CHRIST* performs them. To maintain, that we are justified by these works, is to confound the difference between the law and the gospel.

Asp. Though we should admit your premises, we cannot acquiesce in your conclusion. The same righteousness, by which we are justified, is both legal and evangelical. *Legal*, in respect to *CHRIST*, who was made under the law, that he might obey all its commands. *Evangelical*, in respect to us, who work not ourselves, but believe in the great FULFILLER of all righteousness.—This is much of the same nature with that other momentous distinction in divinity, Salvation is freely given, yet dearly bought. *Freely given*, with regard to us; *dearly bought*, with regard to *CHRIST*. So we are justified *by* works, if you look forward to our SURETY; we are justified *without* works, if you cast a retrospective view on ourselves.

Theron was silent. *Aspasio*, after a short interval, renewed the discourse.—I know not, whether my friend is yielding to my arguments, or searching after objections; deliberating upon a capitulation, or mustering his forces for a fresh sally. However, let me take this opportunity of dropping a hint, and suggesting a caution.

The grand reason, which inclines some people to reject this comfortable doctrine, lies concealed, if not in an absolute disbelief of our LORD's eternal glory and GODHEAD, yet in *unsettled* apprehensions of it, or an habitual *inattention* to it.—If our SAVIOUR was not really GOD, as some writers, unhappily mistaken themselves, endeavour to persuade the world, it would be a reasonable practice, and entirely consistent with their scheme, to disavow the imputation of his righteousness. Because, upon such a supposition, his obedience was no more than bounden duty; in which

which there could not be the leaſt pretence to merit, and which could be profitable to none but himſelf.—Whereas, if we verily believe him to be the incarnate GOD, his ſubmiſſion to the law becomes an act of *voluntary* humiliation. Which circumſtance, together with the *tranſcendent* dignity of his perſon, render his obedience, not meritorious only, but inexpreſſibly and *infinitely* meritorious.

As the blood of *CHRIST* is called GOD's *own blood* *; ſo the obedience of *CHRIST* was performed in the perſon of that adorable MEDIATOR, *who is* GOD *over all* †. He acted through the whole courſe of his life, and ſuffered death at the laſt, not merely as man, but as GOD-Man; as JEHOVAH-JESUS; EMMANUEL.—Let me intreat you to remember, nay, let me intreat you never to forget this *all-important* article of our faith. And may the SPIRIT of wiſdom give us an underſtanding, to know the weighty, the extenſive influence of ſo glorious a truth!

Ther. Far be it from me, to derogate from the dignity of our SAVIOUR's perſon, or to depretiate the merits of his mediatorial office. Place them as high as words can reach; exalt them as far as thought can ſoar; I ſtedfaſtly believe, you will ſtill fall ſhort, unmeaſurably ſhort, of their real worth.—But this conſideration ſeems to increaſe the abſurdity of your notion. For, if *CHRIST*'s righteouſneſs, *his very* righteouſneſs be imputed; then the true believers are altogether as righteous, as *CHRIST* himſelf. Whereas, if you maintain, that his righteouſneſs is imputed only *as to its effects*, you will keep clear of this rock.

Aſp. This, I apprehend, will be like keeping clear of *Scylla*, only to fall foul upon *Charybdis*.—What are the effects of the MEDIATOR's righteouſneſs? Pardon of ſin, juſtification of our perſons, and the ſanctification of our nature. Shall we ſay, theſe effects,

* Acts xx. 28. † Rom. ix. 5.

fects, these benefits are imputed?—To *talk* of their imputation, I think, is an affront to sound sense; as, I am sure to be *put off* with their imputation, would be a fatal disappointment of our hopes.—All these benefits are, not imputed, but imparted; they are not reckoned to us, but are really enjoyed by us; ours they are, not barely in the divine estimation, but by proper and personal possession.

Yet it does by no means follow, that believers are altogether as righteous as *CHRIST* himself, unless you can prove, that to be the *receiver* is, in all respects the same as to be the *author* and *finisher* *.—The righteousness of *CHRIST* arises wholly from himself; the source of ours subsists in another. *CHRIST*'s righteousness is originally and absolutely *his own;* whereas it is made ours in a way of favour and gracious imputation. Circumstances these, which create a material difference, which yield room for a vast pre-eminence.

Ther. But if *CHRIST*'s perfect obedience be accounted ours, methinks, we should have no more need of *pardoning* mercy, than *CHRIST* himself.

Asp. Yes; because, *before* this imputation, we were sunk in guilt, and dead in sins; because, *after* it, we are defective in our duty, and in many things offend.

Ther. Does not this doctrine render the intercession of our SAVIOUR *superfluous?* What occasion have *they* for an advocate with the FATHER, whose righteousness has neither blemish nor imperfection?

Asp. They stand in need of an advocate; first, that they may be brought home to *the REPAIRER of their breaches* †, and made partakers of his righteousness by a living faith. Next, that their faith may be preserved, notwithstanding all opposition, stedfast and immoveable; or rather, may be carried on, victorious and triumphant, even to the end.

Ther. You say, "*CHRIST* performed all that was "con-

* Heb. xii. 2. † Is. lviii. 12.

"conditionary;" then he *repented* for us, and *believed* for us. This must be admitted in pursuance of your principles. But this is so wild a notion, so contrary to reason and scripture, that to mention it, is to refute it.

Asp. CHRIST performed whatever was required by the covenant of works, both before it was violated, and after it had been transgressed. But neither *repentance* nor *faith* were comprehended in this institution. It knew nothing of the one, and it would not admit of the other.—It was not therefore necessary, neither indeed was it possible, for our spotless and divine LORD, to repent of sin, or believe in a SAVIOUR. But he did unspeakably more, *He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself* *. He is himself the SAVIOUR of all the ends of the earth; and he has power to bestow that blessed SPIRIT, which worketh faith and produceth repentance.

Ther. However, from what you have advanced, *this* will unavoidably follow,—That a man is to be justified, under the character of a notorious transgressor of the law; and justified under the character of a sinless observer of the law. And what is this, but a *glaring inconsistency?*

Asp. Not at all inconsistent, but absolutely needful, if we consider those distinct branches of the divine law, the *preceptive* and the *penal*. Both which, in case of guilt already contracted, must necessarily be satisfied.—Not at all inconsistent, but perfectly harmonious, if we take in the two *constituent* parts of justification, the acquittance from guilt, and a title to life. The former supposes us to be transgressors of the law; and such the highest saints in the world are. The latter requires us to be observers of the law; and such must the inheritors of heaven be.—Much less is this inconsistent, if we consider believers in their *personal* and *relative* capacity; as they are in themselves, and as they are in

* Heb. ix. 26.

in their SURETY. Notorious transgressors in themselves, they have a sinless obedience in *CHRIST*. The consciousness of *that*, will be an everlasting motive to humility; the belief of *this*, an inexhaustible source of joy.

All this is no more inconsistent, than the union of a gloomy contexture, and a lightsome splendor, in those detached clouds, which float amidst the firmament. In themselves, they are a *louring* and *dark* collection of vapours; by the impression of the sun-beams, they are *fair* and *bright* as the polished silver.

Ther. After all, the imputation taught in scripture, is not the imputation of *CHRIST*'s righteousness, but of our *own faith*. Agreeably to the apostle's express declaration, *Abraham believed GOD, and it was imputed to him for righteousness* *.

Asp. This objection admits the thing in dispute, though it controverts the way and manner of obtaining it; admits the necessity of some *active*, *positive* righteousness, in order to our justification. In this particular, I am glad to agree with my *Theron:* and in this particular, I believe, the generality of serious people agree with us both.—Whenever their consciences are awakened, and seek to establish the hope of eternal life, they constantly turn their eyes to *some* righteousness; which, they apprehend, may, either in whole or in part, answer the demands of the law. Some look to their own *sincere* obedience. Others call into their succour works of *supererogation*. My friend would assign this office to his *faith*.

Ther. Is this a proper answer to my objection, *Aspasio?* The text is point-blank against your tenet. You do wisely therefore not to confront, but to elude the evidence.

Asp. I did not intend it for an answer; only as an *occasional* observation, which nevertheless has a pretty close

* Rom. iv. 3.

close connection with the subject. Neither would I use so mean a subterfuge, as to elude an argument, which I could not confute. If my friend had allowed me leisure to explain myself, this should have been my reply.

That a man is not justified by works, is a position most clearly demonstrated, and a doctrine most zealously inculcated, by St *Paul*. That faith is a work * exerted by the human mind, is equally certain. Unless therefore we would render the apostle inconsistent with himself, we must understand the passage in a qualified sense.—Why should we not suffer him to be his own interpreter? Why should we not take the *narrative* of his experience, for a *comment* on his doctrine? He declares, that the ground of his own comfort, the cause of his own justification, was, not the *grace* of *faith*, but *the righteousness which is of GOD* by faith †. Not the act of believing, but that grand and glorious object of a sinner's belief, *the Lord our righteousness*.

Besides, what was that faith of *Abraham*, to which the apostle refers; and which he proposes, as the invariable model of our justification?—It was faith in the *promised seed*: in *JESUS CHRIST* the righteous ‡. It was a firm persuasion, that this illustrious PERSON should spring from his loins; and be the author of forgiveness, acceptance, and salvation to himself, and to a multitude of believers, numberless as the stars of heaven. Let us tread in these steps of the holy patriarch, and we shall ascribe *little*, ascribe *nothing* to our faith, but *all* to the infinitely-excellent obedience of our REDEEMER.

Ther. Sure, *Aspasio*, you will not presume to correct inspiration! The inspired writer makes no mention

* So it is called by HIM, who knew what was in man, and what were the differences of things; *This is* THE WORK *of GOD, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent*, John vi. 29.

† Phil. iii. 19.

‡ Compare *Gen.* xv. 5, 6. with *Gal.* iii. 16.

of a REDEEMER's obedience. He says expressly and positively,—*It*, that *Abraham's* faith, and not any thing else, *was counted unto him for righteousness*. *Asp.* True, *Theron;* as those windows are reckoned, are counted, *the lights* of your house. Why? because they illuminate? No; but because they afford a passage to the illuminating rays. Through them, the first and best of elements is diffused into all your habitation.—So *we are saved by grace through faith;* by grace imputing, through faith accepting, the righteousness of *JESUS CHRIST*. Grace is the magnificent source of this nobler light; faith is the means of transmitting it into all the faculties of the soul.

When our LORD declares to the diseased woman, *Thy faith hath made thee whole* *; how are we to understand his words? that the patient's belief, and not the agency of *CHRIST*, wrought the cure? To suppose this would be extremely derogatory to the power of our great PHYSICIAN. And if we ascribe justification to the act of believing, this will be equally derogatory to the obedience of our great MEDIATOR. In the *former* case, *CHRIST* and his omnipotent operation were all in all. In the *latter* case, *CHRIST* and his infinite merit are all in all. In *both* cases, faith is only the eye to discern, or the hand to receive, the sovereign good.

I would farther observe, that faith is very particularly *distinguished from* the righteousness which justifies. We read of the righteousness which is *by* faith, which is *of* faith †. This form of expression puts an apparent

* Matth. ix. 22.

† *Rom.* ix. 30. *Phil.* iii. 9. The apostles, I believe, never make use of this phrase δικαιοσυνης υπερ πιστεως, or δια την πιστιν, but, εκ πιστεως or δια της πιστεως. Not *for*, or on *account of* our faith, but *by* or *through* faith; making this grace, not the procuring cause, but only the instrument of application.—Such language as the former seems contrary to the sound words of our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*. Yet if *Theron's* sense of the text were admitted, the doctrine contained in this unscriptural and offensive style, were the unavoidable consequence.

rent difference between the evangelical faith, and the evangelical righteousness. Since whatever is *by* another, and *of* another, cannot, without the greatest violence to reason and language, be reckoned that other. —If faith was the cause of our acceptance with GOD, then we should be justified by a righteousness which is confessedly *imperfect*. For who has ever attained to the highest degree of this virtue? Or whose faith is not mixed with an alloy of unbelief?—If faith itself was the matter of our justification, I see not how boasting could be *excluded;* how the law could be *magnified;* or what reason the apostle could have to account all things, but the righteousness of *CHRIST*, meaner than dross *.

Say not, that we presume to correct inspiration. We only interpret the inspired word in an harmonious *consistency* with itself. This sense is agreeable to the prevailing doctrine, and to the current language of scripture.—To the *prevailing doctrine;* which is *a believing in HIM who justifieth the ungodly*. Sift and examine this expression; *him* who justifieth. You will find, that the work is *CHRIST*'s; *CHRIST*'s and no *other*'s. The HOLY GHOST assigns not the least share, not so much as a co-efficiency, to any other cause. Faith therefore, if it presumes to arrogate this exalted prerogative, or if it pretends to the least part in this important business, is a sacrilegious usurper.—To the *current language;* as when GOD is called our fear †, our hope ‡, our joy ||. In these places, the act is undoubtedly put for the object. So, in the passage before us, the *act* must denote the *object* of faith. It is to be understood, not absolutely, but as some

* *Phil.* iii. 8. The original is σκυβαλα—a word of the most contemptible meaning; it signifies the *worthless* scraps, and *sordid* offals, that are cast to the dogs. The reader may see this passage more fully explained in *Letter* V.

† Gen. xxxi. 42, 53. ‡ Psal. lxxi. 5. Jer. xiv. 8.
|| Psal. xliii. 4.

ſome divines ſpeak, objectively, inſtrumentally, relatively.

Ther. In the name of wonder, what can you mean by this heap of harſh and obſcure expreſſions! Let me intreat you, *Aſpaſio*, to ſpeak in your own ſtyle, not in the dialect of *Aquinas*. I have an irreconcileable averſion to theſe ſcholaſtic terms. They are the *barbariſms* of divinity. I know but one uſe they are fitted to ſerve; that is, to perplex and puzzle a cauſe you cannot maintain. Somewhat like the liquor, which a certain fiſh, when cloſely purſued, is ſaid to emit, by which the water is darkened, and the foe eluded.

Aſp. This, *Theron*, is the meaning of our uncouth phraſes: It is not faith itſelf, which juſtifies; but that righteouſneſs, which faith continually *views;* which faith delightfully *apprehends;* and on which it finally *terminates*.

To be plainer ſtill;—We are juſtified by faith, in the ſame manner as we are fed by the hand, or as we are ſaid to drink of a cup. Neither the hand nor the cup are the *cauſe* of our ſuſtenance, but the *inſtruments*, one of conveying it, the other of receiving it *. —If an apoſtle affirms, *We are juſtified by faith;* faith itſelf declares, *In the LORD I have righteouſneſs.*

Put

* Though I am entirely of *Theron*'s mind, and can by no means admire our *ſcholaſtic* divines, or their *logical* terms, yet a remark from *Paræus*, couched in this ſtyle, is ſo pertinent to the purpoſe, and ſo full an explication of the point, that it would be an injury to the cauſe, not to make it a part of my notes. And ſome readers, I apprehend, not much acquainted with this old-faſhioned dialect, may be well enough pleaſed to view a ſpecimen; may like it, as they do the *ruſt* of a *medal*, merely for its uncouthneſs and antiquity.

"Faith juſtifies," ſays my author, "not *effectively*, as "working an habitual righteouſneſs in us; not *materially*, as "tho' it were itſelf the conſtituent cauſe of our juſtification; "but it juſtifieth *objectively*, as it apprehendeth *CHRIST*; "and *inſtrumentally*, as it applieth his righteouſneſs."

Put these passages together, and you will have the true sense of our doctrine, and the true doctrine of the gospel.

When *Themistocles* fled from the malice of his countrymen, what recommended him to the protection of King *Admetus?*—Not his name; that was obnoxious.—Not his actions; they had been hostile.—But the person of the *young prince;* whom the distressed refugee caught up in his arms; and, charged with these credentials, presented himself to the royal parent *.—So faith recommends to GOD, and justifies the soul, not for itself, or its own worth; but on account of what it *presents*, and what it *pleads*.

Ther. Is not this a fanciful distinction, and an excessive refinement? Has it any foundation in scripture?

Asp. It is implied in almost all the representations of *CHRIST*, and all the descriptions of faith, which occur in the sacred writings.

CHRIST is likened to *cloathing;* and believers are said to *have put on CHRIST* †. Now, it cannot be the act of putting on, that covers our bodies, or keeps them warm; but the commodious garment which is wore.—He is compared to *bread: I am the bread of life* ‡. Shall we say, it is the act of eating, which strengthens the constitution, and recruits our spirits? No surely; but the food eaten and digested.—*CHRIST* was typified by the *cities of refuge* ||; and sinners, by the obnoxious manslayer; who, if he fled to one of those privileged abodes, and there remained, was safe. No prosecution against him could be valid. He had nothing to fear from the avenger of blood. In this case,

* This, says *Plutarch*, was a custom peculiar to that country; was reckoned the most solemn method of supplicating favour, and *seldom* met with a repulse.—To which I may add, it is a custom that *Christians* should imitate, in all their addresses to the GOD and FATHER of our *LORD JESUS CHRIST.* When thus used, thus improved, it will *never* fail of success.

† Gal. iii. 27. ‡ John. vi. 35. || Numb. xxxv. 13.

case, was it the bare act of flying that screened the criminal? By no means. This *conveyed* him to a place of security. But the *place itself* was his sanctuary, his asylum, his safeguard.

Faith is styled, *a receiving of CHRIST* *: *As many as received him, to them gave he power*, or granted the privilege, *to become the sons of GOD*. The office of faith is, according to this definition, not to contribute its quota, much less to deposit the whole sum, but to take and use the inestimable gift.—Faith is called *a looking unto JESUS*; in allusion, I suppose, to the famous expedient provided for the wounded *Israelites* ‡. Our crucified LORD was prefigured by the brazen serpent; our guilt by the stings of the fiery serpents; and our faith by looking to the miraculous remedy. Did the healing power, I would ask, reside in the mere act of viewing? No: but in the emblem of a dying SAVIOUR, elevated on the pole, and ordained for the recovery of the people. *Here* all the efficacy was lodged. *From hence* it was all derived. The action of the eye, like the office of faith, was only to fetch home, and apply the sanative virtue.

Once more; Faith is represented, as *laying hold* on GOD, our SAVIOUR ‖; *leaning* upon our BELOVED †; *cleaving* to the LORD ††.—Please to take notice of yonder vine. Its shoots are weak, and

* *John* i. 12. See also *Rom.* v. 17; where a critic of accurate judgment, and delicate taste, (tho' little known in *England*,) makes this remark on the word λαμβανοντες, *Non justificat actus sumendi, quatenus est actus; sed illud quod sumitur aut apprehenditur.* BENGELIUS in loc.—His annotations on the New Testament are comprised in a small *quarto* volume. They present the reader with many refined observations on the elegancies of the style, and sublimity of the doctrines. They are a pattern of the *concise* manner; and, which is perhaps the *crowning* excellency, they all along indicate a heart warm and glowing with the love of its subject.

† Heb. xii. 2. ‡ Numb. xxi. 8.

‖ Is. xxvii. 5. †. Cant viii. 5. †† Acts xi. 23.

and its branches flimsy. Being absolutely unable to support themselves, they are furnished with a very remarkable set of *claspers*: which, like so many fingers, lay hold on the pegs of the wall, or fasten themselves to the poles within their reach. Without such a provision, the boughs must lie prostrate on the ground, and be exposed to the insults of every foot. Whereas, by this kind contrivance of nature, so *creeping* a plant will climb into the air, and enjoy the breeze; so *feeble* a plant will stand out the winter, and defy the storms.—An instructive admonition to sinners! and no contemptible illustration of faith, especially in its principal and most distinguishing employ! Thus let us apprehend the blessed *JESUS;* hold us fast by our adored REDEEMER; cleave to his ineffable worthiness, as those twining tendrils by repeated circumvolutions, adhere to their substantial supporters. Then shall we rise, by merits *not our own*, from the most abject and miserable condition, to a state of everlasting honour and joy.

Ther. Some people, I believe, would hardly forbear smiling at the peculiarity of your diction; and might be inclined to call your discourse *canting*, rather than *reasoning*. For my own part, I must acknowledge, that, as all your peculiar phrases are derived from the scriptures, I hear them with reverence, rather than any disposition to sneer. Was my friend delivering a *Latin* oration, it would be a sufficient warrant for any of his expressions, to prove that they came from the *Ciceronian* mint. And will it not be, at least, an equally-sufficient authority for any modes of speech used in a *theological* essay, to alledge that they bear the stamp of the *Bible?*

Though I make no objection to your language, I have yet another scruple with regard to your doctrine. —Do the *ancient fathers* adopt or inculcate this imputed righteousness? If it was so important an article of our faith, surely it could not be *unknown* in

thoſe early ages, which were ſo near the apoſtolical fountain. It would not have been *omitted* by thoſe zealous preachers, who choſe to endure all the rigours of perſecution, rather than renounce their holy profeſſion.

Aſp. I think, it were ſufficient to anſwer this queſtion, by aſking another :—Do the apoſtles, does the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD ſpeaking in ſcripture, inculcate this doctrine, or diſplay this privilege? If ſo, we need not be very ſolicitous for any farther authority. *To the law, and to the teſtimony* *, is our grand, our final appeal. Amidſt all the darkneſs and uncertainty, which evidently run through the writings of the beſt of men, this is our unſpeakable happineſs, that *we have a more ſure word of prophecy; to which we do well to take heed* †.

However, to be a little more particular :—It cannot be expected, that we ſhould find many paſſages in thoſe pious authors, very ſtrong and very explicit, upon the point. Becauſe, in their days, it was not ſo profeſſedly oppoſed; and therefore could not be ſo exactly diſcuſſed, as in later ages. Nevertheleſs, they have left enough behind them, to avouch the ſubſtance of what we aſſert, *That a man is not juſtified by any works, duties, or righteouſneſs of his own, but only by faith in JESUS CHRIST.*—I cannot ſay, that I have charged my memory with their very words; and, for that reaſon, muſt not attempt at preſent to make any citation. But when a proper opportunity offers, and their works are before me, I may poſſibly produce a few of their teſtimonies.

In the mean time, I can mention a ſet of writers, whoſe atteſtation will, I imagine, carry as much weight with my friend, as the united voice of the *Greek* and *Latin* fathers.

Ther. Who are they?

Aſp. Our venerable *reformers*. The homilies compoſed

* Iſ. viii. 20. † 2 Pet. i. 19.

posed by those excellent divines, are as express to my purpose, as they are unexceptionable in their evidence. This is their language:—"The true understanding of "this doctrine, *We be justified freely by faith without* "*works*, is not, that this our *act to believe*, or this our "faith in *CHRIST*, doth justify us: for that were "to count ourselves to be justified by some act or "virtue that is *within ourselves*. But the true mean-"ing thereof is, that although we hear GOD's word, "and believe it; although we have hope and faith, "charity and repentance, and do never so many "good works: yet we must renounce the merit of all "our virtues and good deeds, as things that be far "too weak and insufficient, to deserve remission of sin, "and our justification. We must trust only in GOD's "mercy, and that sacrifice which our High Priest and "Saviour *JESUS CHRIST*, the SON of GOD, "offered for us upon the cross."

The homily subjoins a very apposite illustration; which may conclude our discourse with perfect propriety, and I hope with equal efficacy:—"So that as "St *John Baptist*, altho' he were never so virtuous "and godly a man, yet in the matter of forgiving "sin, he did put the people from him, and appoint "them unto *CHRIST*, saying thus unto them, Be-"hold! yonder *is the LAMB of GOD, which taketh* "*away the sins of the world:* even so, as great and as "godly a virtue as the lively faith is, yet it *putteth us* "*from itself*, and remitteth us unto *CHRIST*, for to "have only by him remission of sins or justification. So "that our faith in *CHRIST*, as it were, saith un-"to us thus, It is not I that take away your sins, but "it is *CHRIST* only; and to him only I send you "for that purpose, forsaking therein all your good "words, thoughts, and works, and only putting your "trust in *CHRIST* *."

Ther. If there be any tolerable sense of the notion

* See the second part of the *Homily on salvation.*

under debate, I think, it must be understood as follows:—*CHRIST*'s performance of the law of his mediation, or, in other words, his unsinning obedience to the moral law, and the spotless sacrifice of himself to the vindictive justice of GOD; these are the *only* valuable considerations, on account of which the *gracious* GOD restores guilty creatures to a state of acceptance with his divine MAJESTY.

Asp. I am far from denying your proposition. I rejoice in the propriety of my *Theron*'s sentiments. May his faith, which is *thus far* advanced, be carried on by grace, till it is completed in glory!—That unsinning obedience, and that spotless sacrifice, are indeed the only valuable, they are also the *truly*, or rather the *infinitely* valuable consideration, which has fully merited for us the remission of sins, and the enjoyment of life; and this not only from the gracious, but even from the *just*, the faithful, the righteous GOD.

But then, they must be *imputed*, in order to furnish us with a claim, and invest us with a right, to the purchased privileges.—Suppose them not imputed; and what becomes of our *interest* in them? They are like a medicine prepared, but not applied. Suppose them imputed; and they lay a firm, an apparent, a rational *foundation*, for every pleasing hope, and for every heavenly blessing.

Ther. I fear, I have acknowledged too much.—My thoughts fluctuate. My mind is unsettled.—I would not withstand the truth. I would not disbelieve any doctrine of the gospel. Yet,—what shall I say? While I *listen* to your reasoning, I am half a convert. When I *recollect* the objections, I revert to my first opinion.

Of this, however, I am convinced, That human righteousness is *insufficient* for our justification. Here your arguments have carried their point. I shall henceforth place my hopes of everlasting happiness, not upon any works of my own, but upon the free goodness, and unbounded beneficence, of the Supreme BEING;

ING; purſuant to that maxim of ſcripture, *The gift of GOD is eternal life.*

Aſp. You do right, *Theron*, to expect eternal life as the gift of GOD, not as the wages of your own obediential ſervice. But be pleaſed to remember, that all the gifts of grace, tho' perfectly *free* to ſinners, are founded upon a grand and ineſtimable *price*, paid by their SAVIOUR.—Are they entirely abſolved from guilt? It is becauſe *CHRIST* gave his life for their ranſom.—Are they heard with acceptance when they pray? It is becauſe their exalted HIGH PRIEST intercedes in their behalf.—Are they completely juſtified, and inſtated in endleſs bliſs? It is becauſe their REDEEMER's conſummate obedience, is the glorious equivalent for this and every other bleſſing.—Therefore, when you mention eternal life as the gift of GOD, you ſhould not forget to add with the holy apoſtle, *through JESUS CHRIST our LORD* *.

——Well, my *Theron;* what ſay you farther? Is your quiver emptied? are your ſcruples ſatisfied? May I interpret this ſilence, as an act of aſſent?

Ther. Obſerve, how the *ranunculuſes*, on yonder gay parterre, have contracted their ſpreading tufts, and the *tulips* have cloſed their expanded cups; while all the neighbouring flowers have ſhut their ivory doors, or drawn their velvet curtains.—Such is the ſtate of my thoughts. They are all bent inwards; *collected* in themſelves; and *pondering* upon your diſcourſe. Which has inclined me, before I was aware, to contemplate, rather than talk.—You will excuſe my thoughtfulneſs *Aſpaſio*. Or, if it wants an apology, you muſt blame yourſelf. For, had your reaſons been leſs cogent, my attention had been more diſengaged.

Aſp. My dear *Theron*, I ſhall only wiſh, in alluſion to your own ſimile, and in the language of the beſt of books, that theſe truths may *diſtil as the dew* † upon your mind, and *lie all night upon your branches* ‡. This,

I am

* Rom. vi. 20. † Deut. xxxii. 2. ‡ Job xxix. 19.

I am perſuaded, is the only way to have all your comforts *green before the ſun*, and all your virtues *flouriſh as an herb*. Whereas, under the influence of any other faith, I am afraid, they will be as the garden that is viſited with a drought, or as the leaves that are ſmitten with a blaſt.

Ther. I ſhall attentively conſider, both your doctrine, and your arguments. Which that I may execute, with more eaſe, and to better purpoſe, be pleaſed to *ſum up*, in a few words, the ſubſtance of what has paſſed.—This done, it will be time to withdraw. The flowers, you ſee, are our monitors. They have folded up their robes, and veiled their beauties. A cuſtom which they ſeldom uſe, till the *riſing damps* render it unſafe for their maſter to be among them; and the *ſurrounding gloom* renders it difficult for his eye to diſtinguiſh them.

Aſp. You could not oblige me more, than by giving me ſuch a command.—We truſt for ſalvation,

Not on our own *external duties*. This were to build our houſe upon the ſand: which, when the rains deſcend, when the torrents pour, when the winds blow with tempeſtuous violence, will certainly fall; and bury the builder, with all his vain hopes, in irretrievable ruin.

Not on the *ſincerity* of our *hearts*. This, if oppoſed to *CHRIST*, and made the rival of his merits, will be a "deſpiſed broken idol." *Deſpiſed* by the infinitely ſublime and majeſtic RULER of the world. *Broken*, with regard to the ſtreſs we lay, or the confidence we repoſe, on ſo deceitful a prop. No more able to ſtand in the judgment of the great day, than *Dagon* was able to maintain his ſtation, before the ark of the LORD GOD of hoſts *.

Not upon our *faith*. This is often weak, as the rickety child; ſometimes quite faint, like the perſon in a deep ſwoon; always imperfect, like every other performance

* 1 Sam. v. 3, 4.

performance of ours. Alas! to what afflicting fears, to what grievous despondency should I, for my part, be perpetually liable, if my own faith was the ground of my justification? Blessed be the FATHER of mercies! we have a surer support. Not upon faith, not upon faith, but upon its gracious AUTHOR, and glorious OBJECT, is the hope of *Israel* founded. Yet

Not upon our LORD's righteousness considered only as passive; but upon his *active* and *passive* obedience united: all that he *did*, in conformity to the commands of the law, and all that he *suffered* in submission to its penalty. Both which, immensely dignified by his divine nature, are a basis for our faith, which nothing can shake; are a foundation for our affiance, which can never be removed.—Nothing else, in any creature, or in all worlds, could expiate the *least sin*. This not only expiates all sin, but gives a title to *every blessing*;—to the blessings of grace, and of glory; of evangelical holiness, and everlasting happiness.

DIALOGUE XI.

Asp. I Have often purposed, and as often forgot, to ask my *Theron*,—what *picture* he was so attentively surveying, when I stole unperceived upon him, in this favourite arbour *.

Ther. I was indulging a pensive pleasure, in viewing the ruins, and contemplating the fate of *Babylon*,—that renowned and opulent city! once the residence of the *Assyrian* monarchs, and capital of one of the greatest empires in the world. The draught I held in my hand, represented some of its remains. And indeed this was the very last subject which employed my thoughts. In the morning, my son brought me his observations

* *See* Dialogue V.

obſervations upon the ſcene, which I have juſt now been reviſing.

For I frequently ſet him to exerciſe his judgment, or diſplay his fancy, on remarkable paſſages which occur in hiſtory.—He was lately commiſſioned to determine a controverſy between the illuſtrious *Leonidas*, and the leſs celebrated *Pædaretus*. This was the point in debate, Which of them diſcovered the *trueſt* generoſity of ſpirit, and the *moſt heroic* love of their country? The former, who willingly ſacrificed his life in its defence? or the latter, who, when he was candidate for a ſeat among the three hundred, and loſt his election, inſtead of being chagrined or diſſatisfied, went home unfeignedly rejoicing, "that there were found in "*Sparta* three hundred men more worthy than him-"ſelf?"—The taſk of this day was, to give a *deſcriptive picture* of thoſe wonderful ruins.

Aſp. Pray let me have the pleaſure of hearing the young gentleman's performance.

Ther. It will be too long, and too puerile; tire your patience, and offend your taſte.

Aſp. I don't uſe to make either of theſe complaints, when I am entertained with *Theron*'s compoſitions. And, as the ſon has ſo much of his father's genius, I am not at all apprehenſive of any ſuch diſappointment.—We have a moſt agreeable ſituation, and more than an hour's leiſure. I muſt therefore repeat my requeſt.

Ther. 'Tis true, I have retouched the ſketch; which may render it ſomewhat more tolerable. And ſince you perſiſt in your demand, I will read the paper.—Only deſiring ſome allowance for a little *luxuriancy* of imagination; which, in young writers, it may be adviſeable to indulge, rather than repreſs; as age and judgment will, probably, come with the pruning-knife, and make the proper retrenchments.—I muſt farther obſerve, that, contrary to the cuſtom which prevails in our ſchools, I generally chuſe to have him expreſs his ſentiments in *Engliſh:* becauſe it is in this language

language he must communicate *his own*, and become acquainted with the ideas of *others*: because to acquire some good degree of propriety and fluency in this his native tongue, will be incomparably more serviceable, than to speak *Latin* with the *Terentian* elegance, or to write it with the *Ciceronian* copiousness.

Is this *Babylon*? the glory of kingdoms! the beauty of the *Chaldean* excellency!

Where once the gorgeous east, with richest hand,
Shower'd on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.

How is she fallen! fallen from the height of magnificence, into the abyss of confusion! What was once the object of universal admiration, is now a spectacle of astonishment and horror.

The *palace*, where Majesty sat enthroned like some terrestrial deity, is a heap of rubbish; no longer distinguished by an air of superior elegance, but by stronger and more melancholy marks of departed dignity *.—Where the nobles of that *sumptuous court* trailed along the marble pavements their robes of purple and embroidery, there the crested snake hisses, or the fierce envenomed adder glides.

How changed is the hospitable *hall*, and how disgraced the *room* of *state*! The first afforded a constant and cordial reception to the welcome guests; in the last, the great king gave audience to his cringing, his adoring vassals. Now thorns over-run the circumference, and "desolation sits in the threshold of them "both."—Where are the roofs of ivory, painted with *vermilion*, and adorned with *sculpture*? the radiant roofs,

* *Benjamin*, a Jew of *Tudela*, in his *Itinerary*, written about the year of our LORD 1170, tells us,—"That he was "upon the place where this city formerly stood, and found it "wholly desolated and destroyed. Only some ruins of *Nebu-"chadnezzar*'s palace were still remaining; but men were a-"fraid to go near them, by reason of the many serpents and "scorpions, that were then in the place."

roofs, whose lamps of burnished silver, pendent in many a blazing row, yielded light as from another sky? Swept from their foundations, they lie clotted with defiling dirt, or clasped with tangling briers.—*Music* no longer pours her harmony, thro' the spacious and extended apartment; but the night-owl, nestling in some clefts of the ruins, screams her harsh and portentous dissonance. *Joy* no longer leads up the sprightly dance, amidst the lustre of that artificial day; but the solitary bat flits in silent circles, or flaps her sooty wings. All those gay delights,—let the *sons* of *sensuality* hear the tale, and take warning from the catastrophe! all those gay delights are extinguished, like one of their feeblest tapers, which, having illuminated for a while the festive assembly, shone itself to the edges of the exhausted socket, and in a moment flashed into stench and darkness.

The *walls*, though cemented with bitumen *, and consolidated into the firmness of a flint, are become like the broken bubble. There was a time, when the inhabitants, confiding in the strength of their bulwarks, and the multitude of their towers, looked down with fearless disdain on the army of besiegers. But now the prophet's threatening is most terribly fulfilled: *The fortress of the high fort of thy walls hath HE brought down, laid low, and brought to the ground, even to the dust* †.—Where are the *gates*, the grand and

* The walls were built of brick, and cemented with a *glutinous* kind of slime, which binds more firmly than any mortar, and soon grows harder than the bricks or stones themselves.—These fortifications were, according to the account given by *Herodotus*, in *breadth* eighty-seven feet, in *height* three hundred and fifty feet, and reckoned to be absolutely *impregnable*: insomuch that the inhabitants, when besieged by *Cyrus*, insulted him from the walls, and laughed at his attempt, as a vain impracticable project, — οι δε ουτω τειχος κατειχον της πολιορκιας. XENOPH. *Inst. Cyr.* lib. VII.

† Is. xxv. 12.

and glittering gates *, which admitted the triumphant hosts, or poured forth their numerous legions against the day of battle? Not one trace remains, to tell the inquisitive stranger, "Here the spacious avenues opened; Here the massy portals rose."—Commodious *walks*, in which the clustering merchants raised the busy hum, and planned the schemes of commerce; ample *streets*, in which Industry drove the toiling car, or smote the sounding anvil; are shrouded with matted grass, or buried beneath the rankest weeds. Silence, in both places, a sullen silence reigns; and inactivity, a death-like inactivity, slumbers.

What is become of those *hanging-gardens*, which, for curious contrivance and stupendous workmanship, were never equalled in any nation under heaven? *Terraces*, that overlooked the tallest houses! *Parterres*, exalted to the clouds, and opening their flowery beauties in that strange region! *Groves*, whose very roots were higher than the tops of the loftiest trees †!—They are now smitten by a dreadful blast. Their beauty is decayed, like a withered leaf. Their very being is gone, like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; which the wind carrieth away, and its place is no where found ‡. What was once the favourite retreat of a queen, and the admiration of the whole world, is now a nest for poisonous reptiles, and a kennel for ravenous beasts.—The traveller, instead of expatiating with delight, where this *pensile paradise* flourished, is struck with horror; keeps at a trembling distance;

* There were no less than an hundred gates, all of *solid brass*. Hence it is, that when JEHOVAH promises to make *Cyrus* master of *Babylon*, he speaks in this very remarkable and particularizing manner, *I will break in pieces before thee the gates of brass*, Is. xlv. 2.

† *Pensiles horti sunt, summam murorum altitudinem æquantes, multarumque arborum umbra et proceritate amœni.* CURT. lib. V.

‡ Dan. ii. 35.

and, surveying the rueful spot, cries out, *Righteous art thou, O LORD, and true are thy judgments!*

Here stands an *obelisk*, maimed by the stroke of revolving years, like a mountain-oak shattered by the flaming bolt. Another, all unhinged and quite disjointed, seems to tremble before every blast that blows.—There the *pyramid* *, firm as the solid rock, and stable, one would have thought, as the everlasting hills, wrenched from its mighty base, is tumbled headlong in enormous ruin, and has crushed many a structure by its fall.—See yonder the *triumphal arch*, which exhibited, through its extensive and beautiful bend, an advantageous view of the firmament. It was, once the graceful memorial of some celebrated victory; it is now converted into a trophy of a very different kind. Just retaining two uneven, battered, ragged stumps, it serves to recognize the destructive ravages of time.—*Spires*, that pierced the clouds, and shot into the skies, are levelled with the trodden soil. On *pinnacles*, to which the strong-winged bird could hardly soar, the grovelling worm crawls, and the sordid snail leaves her slimy track.—*Baths*, that contained the translucent wave, and were so often perfumed with odoriferous unguents, are choked with filth; the grand *colonnade*, that surrounded them, is shivered to pieces, and the elevated *dome*, that covered them, is dashed to the ground.—The public *aqueducts*, which conveyed cleanliness and health along their crystal currents, are degenerated into a stagnating lake; while croking vermine swarm among the weeds, and noisome exhalations steam from the mire.

August and stately *temples*, that seemed to affect the neighbourhood

* *Strabo* calls the temple of *Belus* a *pyramid*, lib. XV. But if the critics in history should question or deny the existence of pyramids among the *Babylonians*, for this and other liberties used by our young declaimer, *Horace* shall make an apology:

——*Pictoribus atque poetis*
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas.

neighbourhood of heaven *, are sunk to the very dust. —Who can point the spot, where the consecrated victim bled, or the sacred fire glowed? where the sceptred image lifted its majestic head, or the venerating crouds bowed the suppliant knee †? Degraded are those splendid vanities, and cast (according to the denunciation of the sacred oracles) *to the bats and to the moles* ‡. All is low; low as the spurious dignity of the idols they complimented; low *as the straw that is trodden down for the dunghill* ‖.

Sepulchres, the once venerable repositories of the dead, awful mansions, destined to everlasting concealment, are cleft and rent asunder. They disclose the horrid secrets of the pit, and frightfully yawn upon the blasted day. Possibly some ravenous creature lurks within, that has already rifled the tomb of its hero; given the putrid bones a new grave; and waits only for the approach of night, to repeat his funeral dirge in yells.—*Inscriptions*, designed to perpetuate some illustrious character, or eternize some heroic deed, are blended in the promiscuous mass. In vain would the prying antiquary search for a legible or consistent sentence;

* A tower in the temple of *Belus*, and dedicated to his worship, was most amazingly high. It consisted of eight piles of building, erected one above another. It arose to the elevation of six hundred feet perpendicular; and is thought, by the learned *Bochart*, to have been part of that superb work, which was begun when *the whole earth was of one language*: but miscarried, or rather was providentially defeated, by the confusion of tongues. In this structure, there were doubtless very strong traces of that arrogant boast, *Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach to heaven*, Gen. xi. 4.

† Alluding to that prodigious instance of profuseness, ostentation, and idolatrous madness, *the golden image set up in the plain of* Dura: *whose height* (that is the height of the statue and pedestal taken together) *was threescore cubits*, Dan. iii. 1. See PRIDEAUX's *Connection*, vol. I. p. 95. &c. p. 567. &c.

‡ Is. ii. 20. ‖ Is. xxv. 10.

tence; in vain attempt to find the memorable names of a *Nebuchadnezzar* or a *Nimrod*. These tho' engraved on plates of brass, or cut in blocks of marble, are lost amidst the stupendous lumber; as prints on the unsteady sand are effaced, when returning tides smooth the furrowed beach.

Here and there a straggling cypress rises, as it were with funeral solemnity, amidst the waste *. Somewhat like the black plumes, nodding over the mournful hearse, they augment the sadness of the scene, and throw a deeper horror on all below.—No human voice is heard, nor human face seen, amidst these desolated heaps. Too dreary, even for the roam of hoary hermit, or the cell of gloomy monk. Abandoned they are, totally abandoned, to the dominion of solitude; or else to the unmolested resort of shaggy monsters, and feathered hags; which stun the midnight-hours,—*these*, with their importunate shrieks,—*those*, with their execrable howls.

See! to what a despicable, what an abhorred state, the proudest monuments of earthly grandeur, and the most costly apparatus for earthly felicity, may be reduced! A pregnant and alarming proof, that for *lasting honour*, or *real happiness*,

They build too low, who build beneath the skies.

Asp. I very much approve the choice of your subject. The ruins of *Persepolis* would have given us a view of magnificence in abasement. The ruins of *Palmyra* might have shewed us elegance in the dust. But the ruins of *Babylon* display at once, magnificence and elegance under an eclipse, *scripture* and *revelation* in

* *Rauwolf*, a *German* traveller, who passed that way, in the year of our LORD 1574, says, "This country is so dry "and barren, that it cannot be tilled; and so bare, that I "should have doubted, whether the potent *Babylon* did stand "there, if I had not known it by several ancient and delicate "antiquities, that are still standing hereabout in great desola-"tion."

in their glory.—The utter destruction of this city, which was absolutely unequalled * in every instance of dignity, and seemingly invincible by any enemy, must certainly have been looked upon as the *most improbable* of events. Nevertheless its utter destruction was decreed by JEHOVAH, and denounced by his prophet, several ages before the execution took place. The awful *sentence* was not only denounced, but recorded, and is still remaining, in the public archives of our religion.

Ther. Where is this sentence recorded, and remaining?

Asp. In the prophecy of *Isaiah;* and not only recorded, but in the most circumstantial manner, and with a minute detail of the horrible desolations. These are the words of the inspired writer; BABYLON, *the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, shall be as when GOD overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces* †.

In the two first sentences, is comprized the most finished picture of prosperity and grandeur. *The glory of kingdoms;* beyond every other royal seat, spacious, ornamented, and wealthy; revered by many conquered and tributary dominions, as their mistress, and their sovereign.—*The beauty of the Chaldees excellency:* the

* *Unequalled*—represented therefore by the *golden* head, in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s prophetic dream, and emblematic image, *Dan.* ii. 38.;—and described by ancient author, as *omnium quas unquam descripsit sol aspexit urbium maxima.* PAUSAN. in Arcad.

† Is. xiii. 19, 20, 21, 22.

the *Chaldeans*, who excelled all the nations of the earth in riches, in ſplendor, and in power, *even they* gloried in this wonderful city. This was the higheſt honour of the moſt illuſtrious, and chief ſtrength of the moſt victorious people; faireſt, where all was conſpicuouſly fair; nobleſt, where all was ſupereminently noble.—Yet this diſtinguiſhed, this crowning city, *ſhall*, at the blaſting of the breath of JEHOVAH, *be* totally, totally deſtroyed, even *as when GOD overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.*

In deſcribing the overthrow, the prophet is equally admirable; and riſes, by a moſt judicious gradation, into all the pomp of horror. *q. d.* "Now, indeed, "it is thronged with citizens; but the hour is co- "ming, when it ſhall be entirely depopulated, and not "ſo much as a ſingle inhabitant left.—Leſt you ſhould "think, that in proceſs of time it may be re-edified, "and again abound with joyful multitudes, *it ſhall* "*never be inhabited* more; no, *never be dwelt in* any "more, *from generation to generation;* but ſhall con- "tinue a diſmal waſte, thro' all ſucceeding ages.— "A waſte ſo diſmal, that none of the neighbouring "*ſhepherds* ſhall *make their fold*, or find ſo much as "an occaſional ſhelter for their flocks, where kings, "grandees, and crouds of affluent citizens, repoſed "themſelves in profound tranquillity. Even the rude "and roving *Arabian* ſhall not venture to *pitch his* "*tent*, nor be able to procure for himſelf the poor "accommodation of a night's lodging, where millions "of polite people baſked in the ſunſhine of profuſe "proſperity.—In ſhort it ſhall neither be *habitable*, "nor *acceſſible;* but a *dwelling-place for dragons*, *an* "*aſtoniſhment and a hiſſing* *. What was once the "*golden city* †, and the metropolis of the world, ſhall "be an everlaſting ſcene of deſolation and horror; "a fearful monument of divine vengeance, and an "awful admonition to human pride."

All

* Jer. li. 37. † Iſ. xiv. 4.

All this is foretold in ſcripture; and, though to human appearance impoſſible, though to human apprehenſion incredible, was, in the appointed time, moſt minutely accompliſhed. The memorials and evidences of the accompliſhment remain to this very day *. They are ſo *authentic*, that the moſt inquiſitive curioſity cannot doubt; and ſo *inconteſtable*, that the moſt bigotted incredulity will not deny. And ſhould not this teach us, to reverence the authority, to admire the wiſdom, and confide in the promiſes, of that heavenly volume?

I know, you are not fond of compliments, *Theron*. Therefore, inſtead of ſpeaking my opinion of your ſon's performance, I will endeavour to return your favour.—You have entertained me with an account of the moſt memorable ruins extant in the material world. Let me preſent my friend with a picture of ruins, no leſs *remarkable*, far more *deplorable*, and unſpeakably *intereſting* to us all. I ſhall give it, in the colouring of a great maſter; whoſe works, this very day, I happened to be peruſing.

The

* It is ſaid, by a very learned author. *Babylonem uſque eo concidiſſe, ut nemo cum fiducia illius locum amplius demonſtrare queat.* i. e. "*Babylon* is now ſo totally deſtroyed, that the "moſt ſkilful geographers cannot, with certainty, determine "the place on which it ſtood."

Should any of my readers prefer this account, I ſhall neither litigate the point, nor be anxious for the conſequence. It may indeed rank *Eugenio*'s compoſition among the works of fancy. But it will realize *Aſpaſio*'s aſſertion, and corroborate his argument. If we find *no memorials* of the city, we have the *moſt evident* verification, and the *fulleſt* accompliſhment, of the prophecy.

If this be the caſe, it gives an amazing emphaſis to that juſt, but terrible decree, iſſued from the ſupreme tribunal; *I will ſweep it with the beſom of deſtruction, ſaith the LORD of hoſts.* "I will not only lay it in ruins, but extirpate it from the earth. "I will efface the very footſteps of its exiſtence; and not leave "ſo much as a *fragment* or a *trace* of the magnificent, but "wicked *Babylon*. Iſ. xiv. 23.

The passage displays a doctrine of the utmost importance in the Christian scheme; and by one of the finest pieces of imagery, to be met with in elegant writing. I think, it may be looked upon as a *practical improvement* of *Eugenio*'s declamation. It pleased me so much, that I transcribed it; and I make no apology for reading it, because I shall expect your thanks.—Only let me hint, that it considers the human soul, as originally an habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT; and then, speaking of its fallen condition, proceeds:

"That he *hath withdrawn himself*, and left *this his* "*temple* desolate, we have many sad and plain proofs "before us. The *stately ruins* are visible to every "eye, that bear in their front (yet extant) this dole- "ful inscription; HERE GOD ONCE DWELT. "Enough appears of the admirable frame and struc- "ture of the *soul of man*, to shew the divine presence "did sometime reside in it; more than enough of vi- "tious *deformity*, to proclaim he is now *retired* and "*gone*. The *lamps* are extinct, the *altar* overturned; "the *light* and *love* are now vanished, which did the "one *shine* with so heavenly brightness; the other "*burn* with so pious fervour. The *golden candlestick* "is displaced, and thrown away as an useless thing, "to make room for the throne of the *prince of dark-* "*ness*. The *sacred incense*, which sent rolling up in "clouds its rich perfumes, is exchanged for a poison- "ous hellish vapour; and here is, *instead of a sweet* "*savour*, *a stench*. The comely order of this house "is turned all into confusion; the *beauties of holiness* "into *noisome impurities*; the *house of prayer* to a *den* "*of thieves*, and that of the worst and most horrid "kind; for every *lust* is a *thief*, and every *theft* is *sa-* "*crilege*. Continual rapine and robbery is committed "upon *holy things*. The noble powers, which were "designed and dedicated to *divine contemplation* and "*delight*, are alienated to the service of the most det-

"picable

" picable idols, and employed into the vileſt intui-
" tions and embraces; to behold and admire *lying va-*
" *nities*, to indulge and cheriſh luſt and wickedneſs.
" There is not now a ſyſtem, an entire table of *co-*
" *herent truths* to be found, or a *frame of holineſs*, but
" ſome ſhivered parcels. How many attempts have
" been made, ſince that fearful fall and ruin of this
" fabric, to compoſe again the truths of ſo many ſe-
" veral kinds into their diſtinct orders, and make up
" frames of ſcience or uſeful knowledge! and after ſo
" many ages, nothing is finiſhed in any kind. Some-
" times truths are miſplaced, and what belongs to *one*
" *kind*, is transferred to *another*, where it will not fit-
" ly match; ſometimes *falſehood inſerted*, which ſhat-
" ters or diſturbs the whole frame. And what with
" much fruitleſs pains is done by one hand, is daſhed
" in pieces by another; and it is the work of a *follow-*
" *ing* age to ſweep away the fine-ſpun cobwebs of a
" *former*. And thoſe truths which are of greateſt uſe,
" are leaſt regarded; their tendency and deſign are
" overlooked, or they are ſo looſened and torn off,
" that they cannot be wrought in, ſo as to take hold
" of the ſoul; but hover as *faint ineffectual notions*,
" that ſignify nothing. Its very fundamental powers
" are ſhaken and disjointed, and their order towards
" one another confounded and broken. So that what
" is judged *conſiderable*, is not *conſidered*; what is re-
" commended as *eligible* and *lovely*, is not loved and
" choſen. Yea, the truth which is after godlineſs, is
" not ſo much *diſbelieved*, as *hated*, *held in unrighteouſ-*
" *neſs*; and ſhines as too feeble a *light*, in that malig-
" nant darkneſs, which *comprehends it not*. You come,
" amidſt all this confuſion, as into the ruined palace
" of ſome great prince, in which you ſee here the frag-
" ments of a noble piller, there the ſhattered pieces
" of ſome curious imagery; and all lying neglected
" and uſeleſs amongſt heaps of dirt. He that invites
" you to take a view of the ſoul of man, gives you

" but such another prospect, and doth but say to you, " *Behold the desolation*, all things rude and waste. So " that should there be any pretence to the divine pre- " sence, it might be said, *If GOD be here, why is it* " *thus?* The faded glory, the darkness, the disorder, " the impurity, the decayed state in all respects of this " temple, too plainly shew, *The GREAT INHA-* " *BITANT is gone* *."

Ther. Your painter, I must own, is a master in his profession; and seems to have a peculiar talent for a *night-piece*.—But why, I beseech you, so much of " his shades and solemnity? Has he no colours, but the dark? no lineaments, but the sour? Could he not allow us one bright tint, one smiling feature, when he was copying the noblest Being in this sublunary world?—Is it for the honour of the great CREATOR, to give such a deformed draught of his most finished workmanship?

Asp. It reflects no kind of dishonour upon the architect of *Babylon*, that its palaces are fallen, its edifices demolished, and its walls levelled with the ground. They might have been built with the exactest symmetry, and once embellished with every graceful ornament, notwithstanding the stroke of violence, or the sap of years, have now reduced them to heaps of rubbish.—The human soul, when recent from the inspiration of the ALMIGHTY, was bright with knowledge, amiable with virtue, and in every respect excellent. But *how*—to speak in the language of the mourning prophet, a language never more pertinent than on the present occasion,—*how is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!*

Ther. Man's soul is rational and eternal; is the offspring of the DEITY, and capable of resembling its MAKER.

Asp.

* See Mr *Howe*'s treatise, entitled, *The living temple*.

Aſp. What *Milton* allows to the fallen archangel, I can readily allow to fallen man:

——He had not loſt
All his original brightneſs.

The grand and diſtinguiſhing faculties of the ſoul remain. Juſt as, when a fountain is poiſoned, the waters continue to flow; but flow no longer with *health*, flow rather with *death* in the ſtream. Theſe very faculties, unleſs renewed and regulated by the influence of religion, muſt be our preſent miſery, and will prove our everlaſting curſe.—"The ſoul," you ſay, "is rational, is eternal." And do not even the devils poſſeſs the powers of reaſon? Is not *their* exiſtence alſo of an endleſs duration? Yet are they, of all creatures, the moſt execrable and the moſt miſerable.

You call the human ſoul the offspring of the DEITY. And you call it properly. Muſt we not then adopt the prophet's exclamation, "*How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, ſon of the morning* *!* How art thou "degenerated, O man, ſon of the MOST HIGH! "Thy glorious original ſerves only to ſet forth, with "more glaring evidence, thy deplorable apoſtaſy."

Capable, you add, of reſembling its MAKER. This, I acknowledge, is a valuable prerogative. In this the infernal ſpirits have no ſhare. But this capacity will always lye dormant, will never awaken into act, never be eſtabliſhed in habit, unleſs almighty GRACE intervene.

Ther. The moſt celebrated philoſophers of antiquity, frequently exhort their readers to *follow nature*, as a certain guide to true excellence.—Many eloquent writers of our own country enlarge upon the *dignity* of human nature; and from this topic derive very forcible arguments, for a correſpondent dignity both of ſentiment and behaviour.—Upon what can thoſe principles

* Iſ. xiv. 12.

ciples of the ancient ſages, and of our later moraliſts, be founded?

Aſp. Indeed, *Theron*, I am at a loſs to tell. If they have any foundation, it is merely imaginary; not laid in truth, nor confirmed by experience.—According to my apprehenſion, they invert the order of things. They take that for a *poſtulatum*, which ought to be ranked among the *deſiderata;* and make an axiom of a mere figment.

Had man continued as he was created; to act according to nature, and according to the law of GOD, would have been one and the ſame thing. For which reaſon, we find no precepts of religion, no delineation of morality, given to *Adam* in paradiſe. Becauſe religion and morality were engraven on his heart; or rather, they reſulted from the very bent and tendency of his perfect frame.—But ſince the fall it is quite otherwiſe.

Ther. Have not many of the ancient worthies been *living confutations* of your opinion? wiſe philoſophers, judicious lawgivers, and ſteady miniſters of juſtice? their deſires refined, their affections benevolent, their whole conduct upright?

Aſp. I cannot forbear wondering, that you ſhould inſtance in lawgivers and miniſters of juſtice. Since the very inſtitution of their office *preſuppoſes* the depravity of mankind. Was human nature agitated by no irregular or vitious inclinations, the barrier of laws would be as needleſs in civil ſocieties, as the vaſt banks of *Holland* are needleſs in our upland counties.

But this, you will ſay, is a digreſſive obſervation. Your queſtion requires a poſitive anſwer. And it is eaſy to anſwer, That the painting is beyond the life. If my author has been too free with the *dark*, my friend has been too laviſh of the *glittering* colours.—Thoſe famous men might aim, perhaps, at the excellency you deſcribe. Not one of them came up to the mark.—Or, ſuppoſe they did, this would not invalidate my tenet.

Ther.

Ther. This not invalidate your tenet! Then demonstration carries no conviction.

Asp. Pray, who is your greatest favourite, among all the renowned persons of antiquity?

Ther. Socrates.—He stands at the head of the class; and was, indisputably, the wisest and the best of the Heathen world.

Asp. I think so too.—Be pleased, however, to recollect the story of the *physiognomist*, who pretended to discover the disposition of the mind by the cast of the countenance. The professor of this occult science undertook, you know, to exercise his skill upon *Socrates;* and pronounced him, after an examination of his features, lascivious, passionate, and morose.—This judgment, so extravagantly wide of the truth, was bringing a storm of ridicule and resentment upon the poor fortune-teller. When the ingenuous philosopher interposed, and owned the description to be exactly true, That *such* was his *natural* temper; and if his conversation had been of a different turn, it was owing to the aids of philosophy.—So that, even in your most finished * character, there was no *innate* dignity. All was *adventitious*. *Ther.*

* Though I love and admire the character of *Socrates*, yet I cannot approve the whole of his conduct. One thing which gives me particular offence is, the *habitual* practice of *swearing*, which occurs in all his conferences with his pupils. Μα τον Δια, Νη Δι, or some such appeal to the DEITY, is used, not only in every discourse, but almost in every page; and that upon the most *unnecessary* occasions.—I have often wondered, that so polite a writer as *Xenophon* should admit this flagrant impropriety into his dialogues. Which, besides its *irreligious* air, is somewhat like the *crambe repetita;* and recurs, and recurs, and recurs, till it is really tiresome. But much more I wonder, that his excellent master should suffer the sanction of an oath to become so *trivial*, and the honour of his *Jupiter* so *cheap*.

This proves the deplorable *blindness* of human reason; which could mistake so notorious a profanation of the divine name, for a genteel embellishment of speech;—it shews us, likewise, our extreme need of that *revealed* law, which, among other refined

Ther. If corruption was derived unto all men from their forefather *Adam*, methinks all ſhould be equally corrupt. But this is contrary to known fact. Some we ſee naturally loving and lovely, gentle in their manners, and ſubject to no inordinate appetites.

Aſp. Some perſons may be of *more compoſed*, or, if you pleaſe, of *leſs diſſolute* manners, than the generality of other people. Thanks to a better temperature of their conſtitution, or a more watchful care in their education.—But ſhew me the unregenerate man, who is ſubject to *no* inordinate appetites. One vile affection may check another, or a ſenſe of decency may hold the curb upon all. But it is one thing, to have the wild beaſt in the heart chained; another, to have him expelled, or the lion transformed into a lamb.

Ther. Have we not often obſerved heroic courage, and a generoſity of ſpirit, where the education has been none of the ſtricteſt? To what can we aſcribe theſe laudable qualities, but to the innate virtue and nobleneſs of the temper, working without any auxiliary ſuccours?

Aſp. Virtue, *Theron*, is a *complete* aſſemblage, not ſome *disjointed* ſhreds, of laudable qualities. Thoſe you mention, if not accompanied with the whole circle of amiable accompliſhments, are no more to be called virtue, than two or three ſcattered fragments of an edifice, are to be honoured with the appellation of an houſe.—How often are thoſe very perſons, with all their fortitude, ſlaves to ignoble pleaſures, or in bondage to the baſeſt luſts? A moſt infallible indication, that they have no *uniform* generoſity, nor any *real* courage.—Deſire of fame may prompt to many ſuch acts, as *dazzle* the ſuperficial eye; which yet are far, very far from *genuine* virtue.

Ther. Do you then attribute the *Grecian* politeneſs, and

refined precepts, unknown to the religion of nature, injoins, *Above all things, ſwear not*;—and, *Thou ſhalt not take the name of the LORD thy GOD in vain.*

and the high *Roman* ſpirit, all the gallant actions of their heroes and generals, to a deſire of fame?

Aſp. There is reaſon to ſuſpect, that they derived their origin from ſome improper motive. And no motive was more artfully inſtilled, or more aſſiduouſly cheriſhed, than the ſpirit of ambition.—View their crowns, their ſtatues, their triumphal ſolemnities.—Read their orators, their hiſtorians, their poets.—The former were the *ſchool*, the latter were the *maſters*, to inculcate this grand leſſon.

Let us conſider the *Romans* a little more attentively; and not amidſt the dregs of their community, but in their very beſt ages; when their republic ſubſiſted, and their *Scipios* flouriſhed. Many great and ſhining deeds were undoubtedly performed. But did they ſpring from a *reverential regard* to the Supreme BEING; from obedience to his will, or zeal for his honour?

If this principle ſhould be thought too refined, did they proceed from a *love* to their *fellow-creatures?* In caſe neither of theſe motives * actuated their conduct, it can never be placed to the account of virtue.—Had benevolence been their leading principle, why ſuch *inhumanity* to *Carthage?* Why muſt that opulent city be laid in aſhes, and her numerous citizens be put to the ſword? Were they enemies to mankind, or a nuiſance in the world? You well know, that they were only too induſtrious, and too powerful. By which means, they would be in a condition to eclipſe the magnificence of the *Roman* name, and diſpute the prize

* A zeal for the honour of GOD, and a concern for the good of our fellow-creatures, are the true ſources of virtue, 1 *Cor.* x. 24, 31. When our actions flow not from theſe principles, reaſon will put a *query* upon them, and revelation will *expunge* them from the liſt of virtues.—They may be ſpecious in themſelves: they may be coſtly to the performer; they may even be ſerviceable to others: but can no more deſerve the title of *virtue*, than the activity of our ſun-fire officers, in extinguiſhing the flames on ſome inſured houſe, can merit the name of *charity*.

prize of ſovereignty with the *Roman* ſtate. For this crime,—a crime, in Ambition's eye, abſolutely inexcuſable,—even *Cato*'s upright ſoul ſhall doom them to utter deſtruction, and *Sipio*'s gentle hand ſhall execute the horrid decree.

Is *this* virtue? Does virtue ravage countries, from the mere wantoneneſs of pride, or luſt of pre-eminence? Does virtue deſtroy millions of lives, only to aggrandize a particular people, or extend the dominion of ſome favourite empire? If *this* were virtue, *Brutus* thought too honourably of her character, when he termed her an *empty name*.—I am ſure, my *Theron* has juſter notions of things. He needs not be informed, that true virtue, far from perſonating the rapacious harpy, acts as a father to others, as a father to all; and, like HIM, who is both its pattern and its author, *goes about doing good*.

Ther. The moſt elegant cane, if plunged into yonder baſon, while the waters are curled by the breeze, will appear both crooked and coarſe. I cannot but think, the accuſers of human nature examine her ſtate with a *prejudiſed* underſtanding; which has the ſame perverſe effect upon their judgment, as thoſe ruffled waves have upon the ſight.—Or elſe, they contemplate her condition with a *melancholy* mind; which, like a jaundiced eye, gives every object a diſtempered aſpect, darkens the chearful, diſcolours the beautiful, and hangs even the ſun in mourning.

Aſp. Rather let this be the compariſon to illuſtrate our point.—View the meaneſt piece of earth, thro' the *priſmatic* glaſs; and it will appear, not beautiful only, but perfectly ſplendid. Remove the deluſory medium, and all the ſophiſticated finery vaniſhes. The indigo, the orange, the violet are gone; and leave nothing to be ſeen, but a rude unornamented lump of clay.—So, if we conſider human nature according to the *partial* repreſentations of ſelf-love, or contemplate

it

it in the *flattering* mirror of ſome popular writings, it may ſeem regular, holy, excellent. But if we behold it under the light, the unerring light of revelation, its fancied charms diſappear; it ſtands clothed with deformity; and is a ſpectacle of commiſeration, if not of horror.

Ther. What reaſon have you to father ſuch a notion upon the ſacred writings?—The ſacred writings inform us, that man was made *after the image of GOD.* This, ſure, could not be ſo diſhonourable and depraved a pattern, as your diſcourſe would inſinuate.

Aſp. Far, very far from a diſhonourable pattern! The image of GOD is the *conſummate ſtandard* of all perfection.—In conformity to this admirable exemplar, our firſt parents were created; and in this admirable condition they continued, till by tranſgreſſion they *fell;* fell from the moſt holy and happy ſtate, into guilt, condemnation, and ruin.—Therefore when this fatal cataſtrophe had taken place, the ſacred hiſtorian varies his ſtyle; and with a remarkable peculiarity, as well as propriety of ſpeech, ſays, *Adam begat a ſon in his own* *; not in the DIVINE *likeneſs.* That every reader may advert to this melancholy, but important truth, it is marked more ſtrongly ſtill, it is enforced by a very emphatical repetition. *After his own image*†, *Moſes* adds; as contradiſtinguiſhed to the image of GOD, mentioned in a preceding verſe. Which expreſſions are evidently intended to denote the difference between the ſtate in which *Adam* was created, and *Seth* was begotten.

Ther. Pray, let me have a ſuccinct, but full account of this tragical ſtory; ſince all your orthodox divines lay ſuch a mighty ſtreſs upon the doctrine of the *fall.*

Aſp. GOD, having formed the human body out of the ground, animated the ſtructure with a living

* This is affirmed, not of *Cain*, but of *Seth*, the moſt excellent of *Adam*'s children, and father of the holy ſeed.

† בדמותו כצלמו Gen. v. 3. *Corruptus corruptum.*

soul; and transcribed upon this soul the image of his blessed SELF. All was light in the understanding; all was rectitude in the will; and nothing but harmony in the affections.—Man, thus endowed, was placed in the delightful garden of *Eden;* and furnished with every accommodation, which was necessary to support his being, or desirable to gratify his senses. —He was constituted lord of this lower creation; and, amidst numberless indulgences, received only *one—easy—negative* command, *not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*—From this he was to abstain, as a pledge of his subjection, and as an exercise of his obedience. Bless and immortality were to be the reward of duty; misery and death the punishment of disobedience. *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die* *, was the sanction of the divine law.

How equitable! how gracious the terms! Yet neither the goodness of GOD could induce him to keep them, nor the authority of GOD deter him from breaking them.—Unreasonably discontented even with such advantageous circumstances, and presumptuously aspiring to be like the MOST HIGH, he hearkened to the suggestions of the evil spirit.—In a word, he violated the precept, and incurred the penalty. GOD was just, and man was undone. He lost his uprightness †; became subject to mortality; and, as the nervous original expresses it, *died the death.*

Ther. True; he became subject to many bodily infirmities, and to the necessity of final dissolution.—But what has this sentence, or what have these sufferings to do with *your* notion of universal depravity in the mind? The death which the almighty LEGISLATOR

* Gen. ii. 17.

† ——— *Innocence, that as a veil*
Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gone,
Just confidence, and native righteousness.
MILT. IX. 1054.

LATOR threatened, can be oppoſed only to the life which the almighty CREATOR gave.

Aſp. Be it ſo.—The CREATOR gave, and man poſſeſſed a life, incomparably more excellent than that which the pulſe imparts, or the beaſts enjoy. He poſſeſſed a *divine life;* which, according to the definition of the apoſtle, conſiſted *in knowledge, in righteouſneſs, and true holineſs* *. This,—which was the diſtinguiſhing glory, and the ſupreme felicity of his nature,—this, alas! was extinct.

His underſtanding, originally enlightened with wiſdom, was clouded and overwhelmed with ignorance.—His heart, once filled with religious veneration, and warmed with heavenly love, became alienated from GOD his MAKER.—His paſſions and appetites, inſtead of moving on, in orderly array, according to the beauteous meaſures of truth and duty, grew mutinous; ſhook off the government of reaſon; and ran wild into the moſt lawleſs extravagancies.—In a word, the whole moral frame was unhinged, disjointed, broken.

Ther. What cauſe have you to ſuppoſe, that all this miſery was either included in the threatening or introduced by the fall?

Aſp. The *ignorance* of fallen *Adam* was palpable. Witneſs that abſurd attempt to hide himſelf from the eye of OMNISCIENCE, among the trees of the garden.—His *averſion* to the all-gracious GOD was equally plain. Otherwiſe he would never have fled from his MAKER; but rather have haſted, and on the wings of deſire, into the place of the divine manifeſtation.

A ſtrange variety of *diſorderly paſſions* † were evidently

* Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10.

† *Milton*, ſpeaking of the unhappy pair, and deſcribing the conſequences of their fall, ſays,

———*Nor only tears*
Rain'd at their eyes; but high winds within

Began

dently predominant in his breaſt.—*Pride;* for he refuſes to acknowledge his guilt, though he cannot but own the fact.—*Ingratitude;* for he obliquely upbraids the CREATOR with his gift, as though it had been a ſnare, rather than a bleſſing; *The woman whom* thou *gaveſt me.*—*Want of natural affection;* for he endeavours to caſt all the blame upon the weaker veſſel; and to acquit his obnoxious ſelf, by impeaching the wife of his boſom.—The female criminal acts the ſame unhumbled part; neither takes ſhame to herſelf; nor gives glory to GOD, nor puts up a ſingle petition for pardon.

As all theſe diſaſters enſued upon the breach of the commandment; they furniſh us, I think, with the beſt *key* to open the meaning of the prohibitory ſanction. They prove, beyond any argument, that ſpiritual death, and all its conſequences, were comprehended in the extent of the threatening.

Ther. How could *one* act of diſobedience produce ſuch deſtructive effects? eraſe the fair image of the GODHEAD; and ſtamp the monſter, ſtamp the very devil in its ſtead?—and ſo *ſmall* an act of diſobedience too!

Aſp. The *prohibition*, if you pleaſe, was ſmall, not ſo the tranſgreſſion. It was committed againſt the cleareſt knowledge of duty, and the ſtrongeſt obligations to obedience. It argued ingratitude for the richeſt favours, and unbelief of the moſt ſolemn declarations. It was an act of the moſt horrid preſumption

Began to riſe; high paſſions, anger, hate,
Miſtruſt, ſuſpicion, diſcord, and ſhook ſore
Their inward ſtate of mind; calm region once,
And full of peace; now toſs'd and turbulent!
For, underſtanding rul'd not, and the will
Heard not her lore! but, in ſubjection now
To ſenſual appetite, who from beneath
Uſurping, over ſovereign reaſon claim'd
Superior ſway. Book IX. 1121.

tion in the creature, and of the most impious rebellion against the CREATOR.

As to the smallness, or rather the *gentle* and *benign* import of the command, this aggravates beyond measure, the crime of disobedience. Alluding to the words once addressed to the *Syrian* general, we may justly expostulate,—"O thou *Adam*, if thy LORD "had bid thee do some great thing *, in submission "to his high authority, and out of gratitude for his "unspeakable goodness, oughtest thou not to have "done it! How much more, when he says to thee? "—Freely eat of all, except this single tree. *Thou-"sands*, *thousands* of honours, privileges, and gifts be "thine; only *one* acknowledgment of thy subjection, "mine; and that the *easiest* which thy heart can wish, "or even thy fancy conceive."

You ask, *How* could one act of disobedience produce such destructive effects?—I answer, the *reality* of the fact, in numberless instances of material nature, is plain to a demonstration; while the *manner* of operation remains an impenetrable secret. Every child perceives the former? *Newton* himself is at a loss for the latter.—For which reason, I have always thought it better to believe what GOD has taught, than attempt to explain what GOD has concealed. Let us forego this curious, perhaps fruitless inquiry; and substitute a remark, which naturally arises from the subject, and may considerably edify our minds.

Ther. Edify! Is it possible to render this dishonourable and afflictive notion *edifying?* Can any generous fruit spring from such a penurious soil?

Asp. *Samson*, I believe, had no expectation of finding any thing valuable in the relics of his slain lion. But, to his agreeable disappointment, *there was honey in the carcase* †. If our doctrine appear *ghastly* as the one, it may yield a benefit *sweet* as the other.

From hence we may learn (what, when rightly learned,

* 2 Kings v. 13. † Judg. xiv. 8.

learned, is more serviceable than all the sciences) the *extreme malignity* of sin.—When *volcanos* open their tremendous jaws, and disgorge a fiery inundation, they confine their fury to a single territory.—When *Famine* lifts her mildewed hand, and destroys the supports of animal life, she is content with ruining a kingdom or a nation.—When *War* drenches his sword in blood, or the *Pestilence* impregnates the air with poison; they also, even they observe some limits, and never make the whole compass of nature the scene of their ravages.—But *Sin* levelled its blow at the whole human race. SIN poured contagion, and spread destruction, through *all* countries, and *all* ages. One *single* act of sin brought confusion and a curse upon the material, and miseries, *infinite millions* of miseries, on the rational world *.—How then should we fear this *most pernicious* of all evils! with what carefulness guard against its insidious allurements! with what resolution fly from its killing caresses!

Ther. I must observe, that you take for granted, what remains to be proved. For, supposing your account true with regard to *Adam*; yet how does this affect his children? Why must all his posterity be contaminated, because their forefather has played the prodigal? Such a heavy charge against the whole body of mankind will not be admitted, without very cogent proofs.

Asp. The proofs are cogent; perhaps irrefragable.—Reason offers to turn evidence in the case. Reason, in concurrence with revelation, demands, *Who can bring a clean*

* St *Chrysostom* calls the first transgression, πανία λυμαινομενη αμαρτια. Which is, in a manner, translated by *Milton*, who, speaking of the same tragical act, says,

——————————*It*
Brought death into the world, and all our wo.

a clean thing out of an unclean *? If the fountain be polluted, how can the ſtreams be pure? and if the root is corrupt, 'tis impoſſible to conceive, how the branches ſhould be ſound, or the fruit good †.

The ſcriptural teſtimonies are almoſt innumerable. They pour their evidence from every quarter; and conſtitute, not two or three only, but a whole cloud of witneſſes.—*GOD made man upright*, ſays the royal preacher; the human nature in its primitive ſtate was without any wrong bias. *But* at, and ever ſince the firſt tranſgreſſion, *they have found out* and followed *many* perverſe *inventions* ‡.

Ther. I don't deny, but multitudes of people, ſeduced by bad *example*, or betrayed by their own *inadvertency*, have departed from the rule of duty; have, as the wiſe man affirms, tried many fooliſh experiments to acquire happineſs, and deviſed as many idle excuſes for their folly. But this is no ſuch irrefragable proof, that they were *originally* bad. It only implies, that, not taking proper head to their ways, they warped from their native uprightneſs. As yonder *tulips*, tho' perfectly beautiful at preſent, if not attended with the neceſſary cultivation, will degenerate into homely flowers; and, at length, be no better than tawdry weeds.

Aſp. No, my friend. Iniquity is not an adventitious thing, catched from example, or contracted by careleſſneſs. Theſe may increaſe, but theſe do not occaſion,

* Job xiv. 4.

† *Milton* has anticipated *Theron*'s objection; and, in *Adam*'s ſoliloquy, very judiciouſly, ſolved it.

——Ah! why ſhould all mankind,
For one man's fault, thus guiltleſs be condemn'd,
If guiltleſs? But from me what can proceed
But all corrupt, both body and mind deprav'd;
Not to do only, but to will the ſame
With me? How can they acquitted ſtand
In ſight of GOD? Book X. 822.

‡ Eccl. vii. 29.

caſion, the *moral malady*. A ſinful diſpoſition is as early as our being; the very mould in which all our faculties are caſt.—*David* bears very expreſs teſtimony to this humbling truth. *Behold!* (He ſets his *N. B.* upon the paſſage. 'Tis a ſad, but certain fact; ſuch as ſhould never depart from my memory, nor ever be omitted in my confeſſions; and is much to be regarded by every reader.) *I was ſhapen in wickedneſs, and in ſin did my mother conceive me* *. As tho' he had ſaid,—"Alas! LORD, this crime, though extremely horrid, is but a little part of my guilt. I "have not only ſinned in practice, but I am totally "and univerſally corrupt in my very nature."

This he acknowledges, not to extenuate his offence, but to lay open his exceſſive vileneſs. And indeed it is not poſſible to form a *right judgment* of ourſelves, or to be *duly humbled* before GOD, unleſs we add the depravation of our nature to the tranſgreſſions of our life. Juſt as it is impoſſible to diſcern what monſtrous and voracious animals lie hid in the ocean, if we only glance an eye upon the ſurface of the waters.

Ther. This, you know, was written by the royal penitent, under the pangs of ſevere remorſe. Does not a ſenſe of his enormous iniquity, together with the apprehenſion of divine wrath, make his hand ſhake, and lead him to *aggravate* features?—Or ſuppoſe it were true of the adulterous king, it is equally applicable to others, who have eſcaped ſuch groſs pollutions?

Aſp. It is no exaggerating draught, but a faithful delineation; and exactly repreſents every child of *Adam*.—It was written with the utmoſt deliberation; and therefore is introduced with that call for peculiar attention, *Behold!*—And, though *David* was ſcandalouſly criminal in his intrigue with the wife of *Uriah*, yet the *general* tenor of his life was not only irreproachable, but exemplary. Who ſo zealous for the houſe

* Pſal. li. 5.

house of his GOD, or so devoted an admirer of the divine word? His heart was an altar, ever flaming with heavenly love; and his tongue a trumpet, to sound the praises of JEHOVAH through all generations.—And if *he* had reason to make this abasing confession, who is the person that can think himself aggrieved by sharing in the imputation?

One of our most eminent martyrs *, when he heard of any malefactor condemned to suffer an ignominious death, used to lay his hand upon his breast, and say,—"The seeds of all those villanies, which brought that "unhappy wretch to the gibbet, were sown *here*. "And, if they have not sprung up unto the same de- "testable deeds, unto divine grace, unto divine grace "*alone*, be all the glory!"

Ther. Your martyrs had honest hearts, but not always the clearest heads. I admire their zeal, and reverence their memories; but I can no more receive their opinion as an oracle, than I can be persuaded to worship their relics.

Asp. I have no intention to palm Popery on my friend, nor any desire to calumniate the human species. If it be disingenuous and sinful to asperse a particular character, how much more unjustifiable to traduce our nature in general?

My account, dark and disgustful as it is, stands confirmed by a higher authority than any private opinion. It is confirmed from an universal *survey* of mankind, taken by the eye of the CREATOR himself, and left upon record in the books of revelation. *The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek after GOD.*—What is the result of this grand inquiry? It must, without all peradventure, be infallibly true: because GOD's inspection is too keen to be eluded, and his judgment too impartial to be biassed. This is the report, made by the infinitely-wise OBSERVER:

* Mr *Bradford*.

*They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy *; there is none that doth good, no not one.*

Ther. This, I apprehend, is the character of those besotted creatures, those most egregious of all fools, *who say, There is no GOD.* To them the *psalm* relates, and to them the abandoned character is appropriated. They have it, if I may so speak, *cum privilegio.*

Asp. It is meant rather of practical, than of speculative Atheists; who say, not *explicitly* with their mouths, but *implicitly* in their hearts, There is no GOD; who live, as if there was no ALL-SEEING EYE, to take cognisance of their present conduct; no Supreme JUDGE, to call them to a future reckoning.—And I dare appeal to yourself, tho' perhaps the fondest of fathers, whether this instance of *foolishness is not bound up in the hearts of our children* †? nay, whether it be not natural to us all, both in youth and manhood, to forget our CREATOR?

In this case, *Theron*, there is no monopoly. Your right and mine are too strongly established by experience, and too clearly expressed in the preceding scripture, to admit of any controversy.—If there were *any* that

* *Psal.* xiv. 2, 3. The two original words אלוח סר are metaphorical expressions; taken from—*wines*, that are become *sour*,—and *meats*, that are in a state of *putrefaction*. I believe, it is impossible to find images, more strongly expressive of a *total* depravity, and of the utmost degeneracy.

† *Prov.* xxii. 15. Let none think, that by *foolishness* the sacred writer means only those *silly* tricks, which discover a weakness of understanding in children. *Solomon*'s fool is not the *idiot*, but the *sinner*; and the folly stigmatized throughout the *Proverbs*, denotes, not a failure in the intellectual, but in the religious and moral character.

The words, in this passage, are peculiarly forcible. *Foolishness is in the heart;* implanted in the very nature; sunk deep into the inmost faculties; and not only sunk deep, but adheres almost inseparably: קשור is *wrapt*, *tied*, and *bound*; twines like the ivy, and is rooted like the oak.

that understood—They are *all* gone out of the way,—There is *none* that doeth good—No, not *one*.—Could any conveyancer in *Europe* have contrived a form of words, more fully to ascertain our unhappy title?

Ther. There may be some texts in scripture, which seem to countenance your assertion. But these refer to the worst of men, in the worst of times. And can you, with any justice, ascribe the properties of a few reprobates to the whole species?

Asp. This very passage, and others of a like import, are adopted by St *Paul*, and applied both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*; with this professed design, *that* every *mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be found guilty* * *before GOD*. Which evinces, I should think, beyond all doubt, the *universality* of its extent.

If to the universality, we add the *antiquity* of this fact, it will bear the two grand characteristics of truth. Far from being a novel opinion, it was received as a maxim, in the early age of *Job*. *What is man, that he should* pretend to *be clean? and he that is born of a woman, that he should* presume to *be righteous?* righteous before the infinitely JUST and HOLY ONE! *Behold! he putteth no trust in his saints*, though the most exalted of all intelligent beings. *Yea, the heavens*, those brightest parts of the material creation, *are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man* †? *who drinketh iniquity*; though loathsome to GOD,

* *Rom.* iii. 19. Υπόδικος γένηται, "May *become* guilty," does not so exactly answer the scope of the context, neither does it so solidly establish the apostle's argument, as "may be *found* "guilty;" be fully convicted, and apparently liable to most just condemnation.—Those things were written of old, and were quoted by St *Paul*, not to *render* men criminal, but to *prove* them so.

† *Job* xv. 14, 15, 16. The immaculate purity of the blessed GOD, and the utter depravity of fallen man, are points of so great importance in the scriptural system of divinity, that they are inculcated no less than *three times*, within the compass of

GOD, and worſe than poiſon to his own ſoul; yet drinketh it *like water;* without any heſitation or the leaſt fear, with an eager and profuſe delight.

This, you will obſerve, was alledged in a diſpute, carried on with no ſmall vehemency; yet is admitted, on all hands, as unexceptionably true.—Be pleaſed alſo to take notice, that the charge is not confined to ſome very notorious ſinners, but is laid againſt the whole body of mankind. Whatever figure they may make, each in his own conceit; they are all deſcribed in the word of GOD,—as *beings*, inſatiably athirſt after evil;—from *objects*, that we cannot endure to behold, or cannot behold without abhorrence *.—*Such* is man by nature! People muſt have eyes very different from mine, to diſcern any *dignity* in this draught.

Ther. As to innate dignity, we will let it paſs. But this I muſt inſiſt upon, and ſeveral writers of the firſt repute are on my ſide.—That we enter the ſtage of life, in a ſtate of *indifference* either to good or evil;—That the affections are like a balance, nicely poiſed, and preponderating neither one way nor the other:—The whole ſoul, like a ſheet of fair paper, is equally ſuſceptible of ſtrait or crooked lines; and will as readily receive the amiable features of an angel, as the hideous deformity of a devil.

Aſp. With regard to your firſt illuſtration,—The ſimile, I think, confutes the ſentiment. For to be *in ſuſpenſe* whether we ſhall love the LORD our GOD, the giver of all good, and the ſource of all perfection; this, ſurely, muſt be condemned as an irreligious

of this ſingle book; and by much the *ſame* noble contraſt of ſtriking images; *chap.* iv. 17, 18. xv. 14, 15, 16. xxv. 4, 5, 6.

* The original words are שקוץ ותועבה —One is uſed to ſignify that *abominable* practice, which the *Ægyptians* could not bear to ſee, *Exod.* vii. ver. 22. *Heb. Bib.* ver. 26. *Engl. Bib.*—The other denotes an object too *ſqualid* to be viewed without loathing.

gious temper.—This is a criminal halting between GOD and *Baal*.—A neutrality, which is no better than hostility.

I fear, the writers you mention, pay but little deference to the inspired volume. Our escutcheon is very differently blazoned in that office of spiritual heraldry. *A transgressor from the womb* *, is one of our hereditary titles. Transgressors we are by strong internal propensity, even before we transgress in outward act.

Observe the young *hawthorn* plants, which have unfolded their green leaves, in yonder nursery; but have scarce learned to spread the gay blossom. Is there in those an equal aptitude to produce the luscious juicy grape, or their own coarse and husky berry? By no means. They will (unless grafted with some generous cyon) *certainly*, *universally*, *constantly* bear the same harsh fruit with their parent-tree.—So certainly will the human mind, if not renewed by the SPIRIT of *CHRIST*, branch out into ungodly tempers and bring forth wicked practices.

Ther. The nobleman, mentioned by *Xenophon* †, when overcome by an alluring temptation, devised, for his excuse, the notion of two souls; one that inclined him to vice; another that prompted him to virtue. This was a moderate *caricatura* ‡, compared with my friend's. He will allow nothing regular or graceful in the human heart.—You have metamorphosed the masterpiece of the creation into such a deformed object, as may justly render him a terror to himself. Can there be a grosser libel upon the CREATOR,

* *Isa.* xlviii. 8. A truth so apparent and undeniable, that *Seneca* could not but *discern* it, though he was an *unenlightened* Heathen; could not but *acknowledge* it, though he was one of the *proud Stoic* sect. *Hac conditione* nati sumus, *animalia obnoxia non paucioribus animi quam corporis morbis.* De ira. lib. II. c. 9.

† *Cyropæd.* lib. VI.

‡ A term used by the *Italian* painters, to signify a resemblance *horrid*, or *ridiculous*.

TOR, or a greater discouragement to our fellow-creatures?

Asp. If this be a distorted piece, what will you call the following description? *GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually* *.—This, perhaps, may be reckoned a more monstrous drawing still. Yet it came from *that* hand, which painted the canopy of the skies, and touched all the pictures of nature into such inimitable perfection.

Pray, let us examine the most distinguishing features in this draught.—Not barely the works of his hand, or the words of his tongue, but the *imaginations of his heart*, are evil. The contagion has spread itself through the inner man. It has tainted the seat of his principles, and the source of his actions †.—Is there not, you will say, some mixture of good? No; they are *only* evil. There is no hopeful tendency. Not so much as a little leaven of piety, that may have a chance to diffuse itself, and meliorate the whole lump. —But are there no lucid intervals? No happy moments, when virtue gains the ascendency? None: he is only evil *continually*. The usurpation of sin is total, and its tyranny perpetual.

What I have advanced, therefore, is no libel upon the CREATOR's benignity: because it is the very echo of his own determination.—Neither is it so properly discouraging, as humbling and alarming to our fellow-creatures. *Humbling*, to make us sensible of our

* Gen. vi. 5.

† The original is very nice in its structure, and no less emphatical in its meaning.—לב The *heart*, or grand principle—מחשבת the *thoughts* of the heart, or the various actings of that principle—יצר the *imagination* of the thoughts, or the produce and result of those actings; namely, desires and affections, counsels and purposes.—Not one, a few only, or the greatest part, but *all* these are evil.

our ruin; *alarming*, to make us desirous of a recovery.

Ther. Is not the description which you have produced, peculiar to the men of that wicked generation; whose guilt was as unparalleled, as their punishment?

Asp. It is applicable both to them and their successors. The wisdom of GOD *repeats* the charge, and fixes it upon the race, which survived the flood *. The depravity of human nature continued, nor could the waters of an universal deluge purge it away. So deep, alas! is the stain, and so incorrigible the virulency, of original corruption, that it will yield to nothing;—to nothing will it yield, but to the *washing of regeneration, and renewing of the HOLY GHOST* †. Till this takes place, every heart of man must wear the prophet's stigmatizing motto, *Deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.*

Ther. This passage, I am informed, is not rightly translated; especially in the *last* expression. The *Hebrew* original does not bear so hard upon the human character, as the *English* version.

Asp. You allow then, that the heart is *deceitful*. And of this we have a glaring proof in the conduct of *Hazael*. He thought it impossible, that he should ever perpetrate such horrid barbarities, as the prophet foresaw. *Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing* ‡? Yes, *Hazael*; however thou mayst imagine thyself gentle as a lamb, thou art fierce as a dog, and

* *Gen.* viii. 21. Where, I think, the particle כ is used in the *adversative*, not the *casual* signification; and should be rendered *though*, rather than *for*.—Where it seems likewise, that the forbearance of the righteous GOD, is ascribed to the great atonement; typified by *Noah*'s burnt-offerings, and expressed by St *Paul* in his epistle to the *Ephesians*; who probably alludes to this passage: *The LORD* smelled a sweet savour, *and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the earth any more for man's sake*, though *the imagination of man's heart be evil from his youth*, Eph. v. 2.

† Tit. iii. 5. ‡ 2 Kings viii. 13.

and savage as a tyger.—Which was most terribly demonstrated by the event.

Suppose we translate the other word somewhat more accurately. The little alteration will be of less service to your cause. Instead of desperately wicked, you may, if you please, read *deplorably disordered* *. This is the exact import of the phrase.—It is a metaphor derived from a very distempered body. In which, the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. *From the crown of* whose *head*, *to the sole of* whose *feet*, there is nothing but consuming disease, and enfeebling languors †.—The rules of civility may set a specious varnish on the conversation. But until grace, sanctifying grace administers the remedy, the most civilized heart will be like the pale emaciated cheek, that is poorly enlivened with paint.

Ther. What say the writers of the New Testament? Is not *their* way of thinking more liberal and benign?—If human nature wore so *hideous* an aspect, under the legal dispensation; since the coming of our LORD, and the publishing of his gospel, one may expect an improved and more pleasing face of things.

Asp. Human nature, in every period of time, and under every dispensation of religion, is still the *same*. It was the SPIRIT of *CHRIST* who indited the Old Testament, and he cannot vary from himself, in the declarations of the New.

I am very much inclined to believe, that all the *bodily* diseases, which our divine PHYSICIAN healed, during his abode on earth, were so many emblematical representations of *spiritual* disorders, which, like certain family-distempers, may be said to run in the blood of all mankind.—Will you give me leave, *Theron*, to explain myself? I don't like to ingross the discourse. Yet I would willingly enlarge upon this subject.

Ther.

* Jer. xvii. 3.

† *Is.* i. 6. Agreeable to this doctrine, and consonant to this metaphor, is the confession of our liturgy, *There is no health in us.*

Ther. By all means. The laws of argument, separate from the indulgencies of friendſhip, give you a warrant to urge, whatever may ſupport your cauſe. —Beſides, I ſhall be glad to hear your ſentiments upon a point ſo curious.

Aſp. The poor *leper*, covered with noiſome ſores, is the very picture of a *polluted ſinner*. Was the one, for his contagious impurities, ſeparated from the ſociety of his fellow-citizens? So ſhall the other, for his abominable uncleanneſs, be baniſhed from the beatific preſence, unleſs he be cleanſed by the blood, and juſtified by the righteouſneſs of *JESUS*.

You pity the condition of that unhappy creature, who was born *blind*. His eyes rolled, but rolled in vain, to find the dawning ray. Such is the benighted ſtate of the human mind, till almighty GOODNESS command the ſcales of ignorance to fall off, and pour heavenly day thro' all the intellectual faculties. Then, and not till then, we begin to know the holineſs, the juſtice, the adorable excellencies of GOD.—We ſee the ſublime purity of his law, and the extreme depravity of our own hearts.—We are brought acquainted with the tranſcendent glories of our REDEEMER's perſon, and apprehend that moſt comfortable myſtery of his ſubſtitution in our ſtead. We diſcern the ineffable perfection of his merits, and the divinely-rich freeneſs of his grace *. Truths, incomparably more delightful to the ſoul, than all the delectable ſcenes of creation are to the ſight.

The paralytic's *enervated* limbs too truly repreſent the impotence of our nature. Was he unable to grind at a mill, to run in a race, or to turn himſelf on his bed?

* This, and the preceding particulars, are leſſons of the laſt importance in the *Chriſtian* ſchool. The knowledge of them deſerves to be moſt ſolicitouſly ſought, both by attentive contemplation, and by earneſt prayer. For to know them, is to be *truly wiſe*; to be influenced by them, is to be *ſubſtantially happy*.

bed? So unable are we to fight the good fight of faith, to exercise the graces of Christianity, or even to turn ourselves unto GOD.—Do not *you*, my friend, experience something of this inability? For *my* part, I must lay my hand on my breast, and daily, hourly, confess, "*The palsy is here.* Tho' not altogether dead "in sin, (blessed be *CHRIST JESUS*, and his "quickening SPIRIT!) yet how languid is my zeal, "how enfeebled my industry, in the great affair of "everlasting salvation!—I would fain believe, and "with a full assurance of faith, the promises of the "unchangeable JEHOVAH. But how often do I "stagger through unbelief!—I would fain love, and "with the warmest gratitude, my ever-merciful and "most beneficent GOD. But oh! what coldness benumbs my affections!—I wish to be humble in every "thought, heavenly in all my desires, and wholly resigned to the divine will. But, alas! my sufficiency "for these things is like the *flaccid* sinew, or the "*withered* arm."

It would be endless to particularize all the maladies, which were emblems of our misery, and the triumphs of our LORD's power. Let me only remark,—That their bodies were afflicted with a *single* disorder; our souls labour under a *complication* of evils.—They *felt* their affliction, and were desirous, importunately desirous of relief. We are, till awakened from above, insensible of our calamitous case. We add, to all our other indispositions, a stupefying lethargy, or an extravagant delirium.

Ther. Such allegorical expositions of scripture are pretty enough. But I presume, you yourself cannot reckon them *demonstrative.* For my own part, I must appeal from the surmises of fancy, to the verdict of reason.

Asp. I cannot think, that the allegorical sense, when *soberly* introduced, is unworthy our regard, or without its weight. However, I have no design to preclude

clude your appeal.—Will the avowed, will the reiterated decision of an apostle, satisfy my friend, and be admitted as the verdict of reason?—St *Paul* has declared of himself, *In me, that is, in my flesh*, or unrenewed nature, *dwelleth no good* *; no good temper, nor so much as any good desire.—Elsewhere he affirms, that *the carnal mind*, or unregenerate soul, *is not subject to the law of GOD;* nay, is an enemy, or rather *enmity* itself †,—against what?—Against sin? That were a noble antipathy.—Against the world? That were a laudable disaffection —No; but against GOD and his law. Amazing perverseness! to be enmity against GOD, who is boundless benignity, and consummate goodness. Enmity against his law, which is the transcript of his amiable perfections, and the faultless model of all virtue.

Ther. This, I suppose, is the character of *Saul* the *Pharisee*, not of *Paul* the apostle; descriptive of his condition, when he was "a blasphemer, a persecutor, "and injurious."

Asp. It relates not to himself alone, but is applicable to all who continue in a state of nature.—The blessed AUTHOR of our being, speaking of mankind in general says, That *he is even flesh* ‡: mere flesh, altogether flesh, his very soul, and all its powers, are wholly inslaved to fleshly appetites.—The beneficent RESTORER of our happiness pronounces the same sentence,

* Rom. vii. 18. † Rom. viii. 7.

‡ *Gen.* vi. 3. The word *flesh*, by which the all-wise CREATOR characterizes man, signifies, in the sacred writings, whatever is *dishonourable* in itself, *provoking* to GOD, or introductory to the *ruin* of man.—The *works of the flesh*, are a compendium of all iniquity, *Gal.* v. 19, 20, 21.—To *walk after the flesh*, is the very reverse of walking in the SPIRIT; diametrically opposite to the divine law and true holiness, *Rom.* viii. 4.—To be *carnally minded*, or to have the influence, the savour, the relish of the flesh (φρονημα σαρκος) predominant in our minds, is the spiritual death of the soul; and a presage of eternal death, both in body and soul, *Rom.* viii. 6.

ſentence, in the very ſame words: *That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh* *: the faculties, which men receive by their natural birth, have a carnal bias; incline to nothing, but ſordid pleaſures and ignoble purſuits.—Our SAVIOUR reinculcates the admonition, and illuſtrates it by a very remarkable alluſion. You cannot forget his anſwer to a procraſtinating diſciple; *Let the dead bury their dead* †: intimating, that as many as are unſanctified by the HOLY GHOST, though poſſeſſed of an animal, are deſtitute of the divine life; are no more fit for the kingdom of heaven, for its converſe or its joys, than a pale corpſe in the coffin, or dry bones in the charnel-houſe, are qualified to tranſact any ſecular buſineſs.

St *Paul* ſets the ſeal of heaven to this momentous truth, in various paſſages of his epiſtles. From a multitude let me ſelect one, and recommend it to your ſerious conſideration. *You that were ſometime alienated and enemies:* the *Coloſſians*, and all mankind were alienated from the living GOD; had no true knowledge of him; and, what is worſe, had no ſincere deſire after him. Nay, they were not only ſtrangers, but enemies; in a ſtate of hoſtility to his holy nature and heavenly will.—What can expreſs a greater degeneracy? Nothing, unleſs it be the following clauſe: *by a mind intent upon wicked works* ‡; a mind, not only averſe to all good, but paſſionately prone to all evil.

Ther. A few picked paſſages, of a figurative import, and artfully cogged by ſome dextrous interpretation, may ſeem to ſupport your cauſe.

Aſp.

* John iii. 6. † Matth. viii. 22.

‡ *Col.* i. 21. Τῃ διανοιᾳ ἐν τοις ἐργοις τοις πονηροις, *mente malis operibus intenta.* An eminent critic would thus point and thus tranſlate the words; and aſſigns, for his alteration, the following reaſon; *mens enim dicitur* eſſe in *ea re quam ſemper cogitat, ad eam cupidine fertur et inclinatur.* DAVENANT in loc.—Let the words be pointed and tranſlated, either in *this* or the *received* manner, they ſpeak the language, and confirm the ſentiments, of this whole dialogue.

Asp. Ah! *Theron*, there is no need to use sleight of hand. He that runs, may read this doctrine in the sacred authors. It is interwoven with the whole series of their *historical*, and makes a professed part of their *practical* writings.

What is more common with the inspired penmen, than to express a profligate course of life, by *following our own imaginations, and walking in our own ways?* When immorality and licentiousness were predominant in *Israel;* knew no restraints, and kept no bounds; how does the unerring historian describe this horrible state of things? *Every one did that which was right in his own eyes* *. Nothing can more strongly imply the extreme depravity of mankind, than such a phraseology: which makes it one and the same thing, to pursue our *natural* inclinations, and to act the abandoned sinner.

St *Jude* cannot write a few lines, but he must touch upon this subject; must teach this humbling lesson. *Sensual* †, he says, *not having the SPIRIT.* According to *his* estimate, not to be actuated by the power of especial grace, is to remain under the dominion of sensuality. If we may credit this servant of *CHRIST*, *every* man, while unrenewed by the divine SPIRIT, is governed by flesh and sense. Can *any* man then pretend to be originally free from the influence of corruption?

St *Paul* exempts not himself, no, nor any of the highest saints, from the opprobrious charge: *We all walked according to the desires of the flesh and of the mind.* Which desires in *us*, as well as in the idolatrous *Heathens*, were base, sordid, and contaminating. Insomuch that we, who are *Jews* by birth, who are sons

* Judg. xviii. 6.—*See also* Psal. lxxxi. 12. Eccl. xi. 9. Acts xiv. 16.

† *Jude* 19. The original expression is ψυχικοι, and denotes persons, who have no higher a principle, than the *animal* life, and the *rational* soul.

ſons of GOD by our new birth; even we were *by nature the children of wrath* *. And if liable to wrath, then, doubtleſs, ſubject to depravity, and chargeable with ſin.

Ther. What ſays St *James?* You have ſuppreſſed, and I had almoſt forgot, his teſtimony; tho' it is ſo very pertinent to my purpoſe, and ſo very explicit in my favour. *Men, who are made after the ſimilitude of GOD.*—The ſimilitude of GOD ſignifies, in the ſacred books, thoſe moral endowments, which diſtinguiſh the poſſeſſor both from the brute and the devil. And if men are made after this image, if they are created with theſe endowments, *where* is your doctrine of original ſin?

Aſp. I began to flatter myſelf, that your objections were exhauſted. But, ſince I am miſtaken in this particular, ſurely it muſt be as great a miſtake to imagine that our apoſtle would maintain an opinion, ſo repugnant to the aforementioned texts, and ſo contrary to univerſal obſervation.—Do not you perceive the very reverſe true, with regard to your own *children?* Why do you addreſs them with ſuch tender intreaties, ſuch warm exhortations, ſuch repeated arguments? Why do you allure them to duty by promiſes, and deter them from tranſgreſſion by threatnings? Is all this regimen, all this diſcipline, neceſſary for creatures that bear the holy image of GOD?

They *made after the ſimilitude of GOD!*—Then they have no need of the *renewing* influences of the HOLY GHOST, in caſe they live; and no need of the *atonement* of *CHRIST*'s blood, in caſe they die. Would *James* the LORD's brother aſſert ſuch an egregious error, as not only oppoſes a ſingle article, but undermines the *whole* conſtitution of Chriſtianity? ſets aſide the ſanctification of the divine SPIRIT, and the

* *Eph.* ii. 3. *Hoc uno loco*, ſays BEZA, *quaſi fulmine, totus homo, quantus quantus eſt, proſternitur. Neque enim naturam dicit* læſam, *ſed* mortuam, *per peccatum; ideoque* iræ *obnoxiam.*

the propitiation of the REDEEMER's death?—Impossible for him to assert! impossible, I should think, for us to suppose!

St *James* speaks of a fact that is *past;* speaks of men *collectively*, as they were all included in their first parent. The passage, I apprehend, should be translated, not, men that *are*, but, men that *were* * created, &c.—The scripture considers *Adam*, as the common parent of us all; nay more, considers us all as existing in our great progenitor. Which is so far from overthrowing, that it establishes, the point in debate, For if we were all created after the similitude of GOD, in and with *Adam;* it must follow, that we all fell from our conformity to GOD, in and with *Adam*. And if so—let me for once retort my friend's interrogatory—Where is not original sin?

I am very sure, it runs through our *liturgy;* is an essential part of our *articles;* and most strongly delineated in our *homilies*. Shall I produce some of those testimonies, which are as clear, as they are copious?

Ther. No more of your testimonies, good *Aspasio*. Inform me rather, what *advantages* can accrue from your inculcating, or my adopting such a doctrine. Suppose it were undeniably true, disagreeable truths, like disagreeable objects, should be consigned over to obscurity, not obtruded upon our view.—On such an occasion, the reply of *Themistocles* should be mine. One of the *literati* of *Greece* offered to communicate an elaborate and curious invention; by means of which, his memory should be so wonderfully strengthened, as to retain whatever he read or heard. "My "friend," replied the hero, "you quite mistake the "way

* *Jam.* iii. 9. That this is the precise signification of the participle γεγονοτας, may be gathered from 1 *Tim.* v. 9. where γεγονυια is translated *having been;* and most necessarily refer, not to the *present*, but to the *past* condition of the widow.

" way to ſerve me. I want to learn the art, not of " *remembering*, but of *forgetting*."

Aſp. if to forget our diſeaſe, were a likely method to *reſtore* our health, I ſhould readily concur in your hero's way of thinking. As this will hardly be allowed, I cannot but judge it more adviſeable, to remember our diſeaſe, that we may inquire after a remedy.

Ther. Where is this remedy to be had?

Aſp. Not on earth, but from heaven.—The ſchools of ſcience cannot diſcover it. The courts of kings are unable to procure it. The college of phyſicians know not how to preſcribe it. But the goſpel of our ſalvation preſcribes, prepares, and diſpenſes it. The language of *CHRIST* in his holy word is, *I will bring her health and cure* *. And the beginning of our cure is, to be ſenſible of our diſorder.

Hence we are taught to be *humble*.—To review the catalogue of our actual tranſgreſſions, is a mortifying employ. But that which lays the ſoul in the loweſt abaſement, is the conviction of *inbred* iniquity. This ſtrikes at the root of human vanity, and cuts aſunder the very ſinews of ſelf-conceit. Blindneſs in the underſtanding; impotency in the will; diſorder in the affections; theſe are not *viſitants*, but † *inhabitants*; congenial with our frame, and ingrained in our conſtitution. How then—O! how can *we* be vain of our moral beauty, who have an hereditary defilement cleaving to all our faculties? Surely this muſt baniſh the *Phariſee* from our breaſt, and inſpire us with the ſentiments of that ſincere penitent, *Behold! I am vile* ‡! muſt teach us the language of the abaſhed leper, *Unclean! unclean* ‖!

Ther. I ſhould think, it would make us *melancholy*, rather

* Jer. xxxiii. 6.

† Called therefore ἡ οἰκουσα ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία, *ſin that dwelleth in me*, Rom. vii. 17.

‡ Job xl. 4. ‖ Lev. xiii. 45.

rather than humble; serve to no other purpose, than to introduce an afflictive sense of extreme wretchedness.

Asp. Did we intend to rest here, your apprehensions would be just. But we urge the doctrine of original corruption, as a *preparative* for the redemption of *CHRIST*.

It is observable, that very few applied to the blessed *JESUS* in the days of his flesh, but the sons and daughters of affliction. The levee of that PRINCE of peace was crouded by the lame, the blind, the diseased. These, being sensible of distress, and longing for relief, fell as humble supplicants at his feet. While others who were firm in their health, and gay in their spirits, rejected him with contemptuous scorn.—When we perceive "the plague of our heart," and feel those worse than ulcerous sores, which overspread our nature; we also shall ardently seek to *the LORD our healer*. When we find ourselves subject to the curse of the law, in bondage to the tyranny of Satan, and liable to everlasting damnation; *then* the divine PHYSICIAN, and the divine REDEEMER will be precious indeed.—Whereas, if we remain insensible of our misery, the gospel, which is *saving health* to the contrite soul, will be an unaffecting story to our ears. We may hear it, we may read it, as an amusing narrative; but shall not *receive* it, as a sovereign remedy.

Ther. Not receive the gospel, *Aspasio!* I hardly understand what you mean. I often study the gospel; I believe it to be a divine revelation; and endeavour to follow its directions.—I look upon it, as containing the most refined system of morality; as enforcing every virtue, by the strongest motives; and recommending all, by the most perfect example.

Asp. To which you should add,—as revealing that great MEDIATOR, who has fulfilled all righteousness, to effect our justification; who has also the fulness of the SPIRIT, to accomplish our regeneration.

Otherwiſe, what you mention, is infinitely ſhort of the *goſpel*.—It brings no glad tidings to fallen creatures. It adminiſters no ſuccour to ruined ſinners. It is like writing a copy for the blind, or ſetting a taſk to the diſabled; which would rather be an inſult on their impotence, than a relief of their diſtreſs.

The firſt particular I wave at preſent. Only let me aſk your opinion of the laſt; which is a grand doctrine, and a very diſtinguiſhing privilege of the goſpel. I mean the doctrine and the privilege of *ſpiritual regeneration*. Excluſive of which, all your endeavours to poſſeſs virtue and practiſe morality, will be no better than endeavours to fly without wings, or to run without feet.

While unimpreſſed with a ſenſe of our original depravity, we ſhall probably ſit down contented with ſome *ſuperficial* reformation, and not aſpire after a renewal of the heart. *Civility* will paſs for ſanctity, and a *temperate* diſpoſition for a gracious habit.—Why is the new birth, why are all the ſaving operations of the bleſſed SPIRIT, diſregarded by ſome, derided by others? Becauſe theſe perſons are inſenſible of their utter inability to all good, and of their abject ſlavery to all evil. Therefore they ſee no reaſon for *this* divine agency, or for *that* univerſal change.

You alſo, my dear friend, while unacquainted with your natural corruption, cannot apprehend either the reaſonableneſs or the neceſſity of being *renewed in the ſpirit of your mind* *. But when experience has taught you the former, you will want no arguments to convince you of the latter.—Can creatures, who are *blind* in their underſtandings, diſcern the things which belong to their eternal peace?—Can creatures, who are *dead* in ſin, exerciſe the graces, or diſcharge the duties, of a Chriſtian life?—Can creatures, whoſe hearts are *enmity* againſt GOD, either delight to do his

* Eph. iv. 23.

his will here, or be meet for his beatific presence hereafter?

Under the influence of such convictions, that new birth, which the gospel of *CHRIST* promises, which the SPIRIT of GOD produces, will appear as necessary for your state, and be as welcome to your soul, as these gentle *dews* are necessary for the languishing herbs, and welcome to the thirsty soil.

Ther. The dews, though refreshing to the flowers, may be too chilly for our constitutions. And see! the star of evening, by proclaiming the approach of night, has given us a warning to quit our arbour.—Some other time we must resume this inquiry. For I am by no means satisfied, that your theory agrees with experience.

Asp. I fear, I have already kept you out too long. Let me just observe, as we go in,—that the doctrine, however disagreeable in itself, is conducted to an *advantageous* issue. It is productive of a much more substantial consolation, than history assigns to the great, but exiled *Marius*. When he fled, with his ruined circumstances, to linger out the poor remains of life among the ruins of *Carthage*, what was his chief support? "Contemplating," says my author, "that famous city in the dust, he was the less afflicted with "his own downfal *."

We have not been put off with such cold comforts, such *negative* benefits. The belief of original sin has a tendency,—to make us *humble*,—to shew us our *need* of *CHRIST*,—to create in us a hunger and thirst after the *renewing* influences of his SPIRIT, and the justifying merit of his righteousness.—So that it must be owing to our own perverseness, or our own negligence, if we do not levy a *tax* upon our *loss*, and *rise* even by our *fall*.

DIA-

* *Inopem vitam in tugurio ruinarum Carthagenienſium toleravit: cum Marius aſpiciens Carthaginem, illa intuens Mariam, alter alteri poſſent eſſe ſolatio.* VELL. PATERC.

DIALOGUE XII.

THE ſun was fiercely bright, and the ſky without a cloud.—Not a breath fanned the woods, nor a gale curled the ſtream.—The fields, expoſed to all the fiery beams, were like a glowing hearth.—The little birds, overcome by the potent influence, loſt for a while their tuneful notes. Nothing was heard in the garden, but the drowſy hum of bees, and the moan-like buz of winged inſects.—All nature ſeemed to *languiſh*. The flouriſhing meads looked ſickly; the gayeſt bloſſoms began to fade; the ſprightlieſt animals, if not repoſed under ſome cooling ſhelter, panted for breath, and hung their drooping heads, amidſt the all-ſurrounding blaze and the unſufferable heat.

Aſpaſio diſappeared ever ſince dinner, and none could tell whither he was gone.—*Theron*, as ſoon as the tea-equipage was removed, took his way to the *wood*. Deſirous of the thickeſt ſhade, he haſtened to the centre. A ſerpentine walk compoſed the avenue: which, after ſeveral windings, delivered him into a large circular area: not covered with a *Grecian* or *Roman* temple, unmeaning imitation of Pagan idolatry; but ſurrounded with aged and princely oaks: the coalition of whoſe branches threw over the graſſy plat a majeſtic rural dome, and their unpierced foliage *imbrowned the noon-tide hours*.

In the midſt, and elevated on a ſquare baſe, was a ſtatue repreſenting the venerable *Elijah*,—on his bended knees,—with hands ſtretched out, and eyes lifted up to heaven. His attitude, his air, his every feature, were a moſt lively comment on thoſe ſtrong energetic expreſſions of ſcripture; *Take hold on GOD*†; *Wreſtle*

* Iſ. lxiv. 7.

Wreſtle with the ALMIGHTY ; Pour out your hearts before him* †.—On one ſide of the pedeſtal, were engraven the prieſts of *Baal*, in frantic emotions calling upon their ſenſeleſs deity, and gaſhing themſelves with unavailing wounds.—On the other was exhibited, in baſſo-relievo, the adoring *Tiſhbite*'s altar; his victim burning with fire from the LORD, even while the water ran from every limb, and overflowed the trench below.

A remote caſcade tumbled from a craggy rock. The ſtream, after having waſted its ſilver foam in a winding progreſs, ſtraggled into this grand arbour. Here it juſt appeared, gliding down a gentle ſlope, with a flaunting air, and a prattling noiſe. Impreſſed, as it were, with the unexpected *ſolemnity* of the ſcene, it ſeemed to check its wanton-waves, and turned aſide into a more ſequeſtered path. As ſome *heedleſs* trifler, who bolts unawares into the royal preſence, ſtands ſtruck with reverence and awe, or retires with precipitance and confuſion.

The deep gloom, ſhedding a kind of night, even while the ſun glared in the ſky;—not a whiſper ſtirring, among ſo many millions of leaves; and all their warbling natives huſhed in ſilence;—the ſonorous *toll* of the diſtant caſcade, and the tinkling *chime* of the nearer rill;—the profound adoration, and fervent devotion, which lived in the lineaments of the impaſſioned ſtone:—All theſe circumſtances rendered the place prodigiouſly auguſt and ſtriking. Not much unlike the ancient *oratories* ‡, where holy people retired

* *Coloſſ.* iv. 12. Αγωνιζομενος υπερ ημων εν ταις προσευχαις.

† Pſal. lxii. 8.

‡ It is thought by ſome eminent critics, that, when our LORD continued all night εν προσευχη Θεου, Luke vi. 12. the phraſe denotes his continuance in *an oratory*; a place ſet apart for prayer, and a devout intercourſe with GOD.

That there were places of this kind among the *Jews*, is indiſputable;

tired from the giddy ring, and the buſtling croud, to ennoble their minds, with ſublime contemplation; where they bid a temporary adieu to the tumultuous world, its gay impertinence and ſolemn dullneſs, in order to maintain a more uninterrupted communion with that mighty BEING, who *ſitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as graſſhoppers* before HIM *.

Welcome to *Theron* was the ſhady bower; welcome the cool aſpect, and the muſical flow of the water; but more welcome than all was the ſight of his friend, who

diſputable; and that the opinion is ingenious, cannot be denied. But I very much doubt, whether it gives us the true meaning of the Evangeliſt.—Having mentioned *a mountain*, it would hardly ſuit his conciſe manner, to be more particular with regard to the place; neither was the circumſtance ſo important, as to deſerve a ſecond mention.—I am apt to think alſo, that *ſuch a place* would have defeated the deſign of our SAVIOUR's retirement, which ſeems to have been privacy; and that *ſuch* a *title*, as GOD's place of prayer, was wholly appropriated to the temple.

I apprehend, we ſhall have a more *defenſible*, and, I am perſuaded, we ſhall have a more *exalted* ſenſe, if we ſuppoſe the expreſſion to ſignify,—the copiouſneſs and fervour of our LORD's devotion,—the vaſt importance, and the unequalled ſucceſs, of this his prolonged and ſolemn prayer: which could no way be more emphatically declared, than by the addition of the divine name: *He continued all night in* the prayer of GOD.—See *Aſpaſio*'s remark, *p.* 342.

* *If.* xl. 22. What a noble *image* is here, and what an exquiſitely-fine *contraſt!* GOD, the great GOD, ſitteth on thoſe lofty and immenſe heavens, which, at an inconceivable diſtance, ſurround this penſile globe. From that moſt ſublime and magnificent throne, he looks down upon the inhabitants of the earth: who,—in all their pomp and ſplendor,—amidſt all their admired works and boaſted acquiſitions,—are *mean* and *impotent* in his ſight: mean and impotent as the poor inſects, which wander over the parched heath for ſuſtenance; which ſpend all the day in idle inſignificant chirpings; and, at night, take up their contemptible habitation on a blade of graſs.

who lay reclined at the foot of an oak, with a book half open in his hand, and his eye fixed upon the ſtatue.

Ther. I know not, *Aſpaſio*, whether I muſt make an apology, for breaking in upon your retirement; or call you to an account, for depriving the ladies of your company at the tea-table.

Aſp. Indeed, *Theron*, I have been ſo much delighted with the place, with the companion in my hand, and the noble object before me, that I ſcarce obſerved, how the time ſtole away. And I flatter myſelf, if you will take a ſeat by my ſide, and ſhare my entertainment; you will be more inclined to excuſe, than to aggravate my fault.

Ther. Is *Tully* then (for I obſerve his name on the volume) your companion? And can ſuch a devoted admirer of the *Bible* be ſo highly charmed with a *Heathen claſſic?*—St *Auguſtine* ſomewhere declares, that, though paſſionately fond, before his converſion, of *Tully*'s writings; yet, after that memorable change, he could no longer reliſh thoſe admired compoſitions; becauſe they were not ſweetened, as he expreſſes himſelf, with the *melliſluous* name of *JESUS*.

Aſp. I am far from pretending to ſuch an exalted pitch of devotion, as that ſeraphic father attained. I can ſpend a vacant minute on the delicate odes of *Horace;* and taſte a refined entertainment in *Virgil*'s beautiful poem. But when I hear a *ſermon*, or peruſe a *religious* treatiſe, which borrows neither dignity nor charms from that amiable and glorious name, I own myſelf extremely diſappointed. Without the offices, the merits, or the grace of *CHRIST*, the ſermon and the treatiſe appear as *defective*, as a body that is neither adorned with the head, nor enlivened with the heart.

Ther. I ſuppoſe then you cultivate an acquaintance with the *Grecian* and *Roman* authors, in order to improve your taſte, and poliſh your ſtyle.

Aſp. Theſe, and, I am apt to think, more conſider-

able advantages than these, may be derived from an occasional application to their works. They may serve as so many shades, to set off, with *heightened* lustre, the beauty and glory of the sacred oracles.

While I peruse *Plato*'s ornamented page, or listen to *Cicero*'s flowing periods, I am somewhat like the person who amuses himself in a gallery of *painted* flowers. He is pleased with the curious creation of the pencil; but finds none of that *delicious* fragrance, none of those *breathing* sweets, which meet him in the garden, and regale his sense from the blooming parterre.—So here are brilliant sentiments, and a florid diction; delicate touches of wit, and bold strokes of description. But no discovery of *CHRIST JESUS*,—no displays of his ineffable love,—no overtures of reconciliation with the blessed GOD. Nothing to yield us *solid* comfort in our present state, or any *joyful* expectations with regard to the approaching eternity.

Besides when I converse with those celebrated geniuses of antiquity, who were at once the most erroneous, and the most judicious;—the *most judicious* in their taste of polite literature; the *most erroneous* in their apprehensions of invisible things; they shew me, what they never intended, the inexpressible need of *revelation*. They teach me to set a higher value on that inestimable gift. I bless the distinguishing goodness of Providence, which has cast my lot *, not at *Athens*, but in EMMANUEL's land. I say, with wonder and gratitude,—"Why did not *my* existence "commence in those æras of religious dotage? Why "was not *my* portion confined to those regions of bar-"barism and delusion? Why am not I burning in-"cense

* Alluding to the story of the philosopher, who used to bless the gods for three privileges:—That he was made, not a *brute* but a *rational* creature:—That he was born, not in *barbarous* climes, but in *Greece*:—That he lived, not in the more *uncultivated* ages, but in the time, and under the tuition of *Socrates*.

" cenſe to idols; paying ſenſeleſs adoration to ſculp-
" tured ſtone; or worſhipping, with deteſtable cere-
" monies, a ſet of laſcivious, debauched, and ſcanda-
" lous ‡ deities?"—Surely, *Theron*, from every peru-ſal of thoſe volumes, attended with ſuch a reflection, we ſhall ſee the utmoſt reaſon to magnify *the tender mercies of our GOD; whereby the day-ſpring from on high hath viſited us* †, and brought us out of darkneſs into the marvellous light of the goſpel.

Permit me to mention another benefit, which may reſult from a correſpondence with thoſe maſterly writers.—The ſtreams may lead us to the inexhauſtible fountain; lead us to admire the *only wiſe* GOD our SAVIOUR, who has given ſuch a ſhining vein of ingenuity to his rational creatures. As I read their works, and am charmed with their beauties, I would frequently reflect,—" If the eſſays of a finite mind,
" and the compoſitions of a mortal pen, yield ſuch
" *high ſatisfaction;* what rapturous, what unknown
" delight muſt ariſe from an uninterrupted commu-
" nion with infinite Wiſdom? To ſtand,—not at the
" feet of *Homer*, and attend the flights of his elevated
" imagination,—not in the preſence of *Socrates*, and
" hear the dictates of his ſagacious ſoul;—but to
" ſtand in the courts of the LORD, and before the
" throne of the LAMB: there to contemplate, with-
" out any interpoſing veil, the counſels of his un-
" erring providence; to have the myſteries of his re-

* This, I think, gives us the moſt deplorable and horrid idea of the *blindneſs* of our fallen nature. The Heathens, even amidſt all the politeneſs of their taſte, and notwithſtanding their ſuperior advancement in the ſciences, were haters of the true GOD, and robbed him of his honour: nay, what is unſpeakably worſe, they paid it to *monſters;*—monſters of lewdneſs and treachery, vice and immorality. Egregious, ſottiſh, almoſt incredible ſtupidity! to *worſhip* thoſe beings, which deſerved univerſal *abhorrence!* to *deify* thoſe characters, which could never be ſufficiently *deteſted!*

† Luke i. 78.

" deeming love, laid fully open to our view; and re-
" ceive the brighteſt manifeſtation of all his amiable,
" his adorable, his unſpeakable attributes!"

Ther. Theſe are advantages truly deſirable, and equally obvious. Methinks, it *ſurpriſes* me, that I ſhould never ſo much as propoſe them; and *grieves* me, that I ſhould ſo long be deprived of them. A view to ſuch very ſuperior improvements will, I hope, render my future intercourſe with thoſe favourite authors, ſtill more agreeable, and abundantly more beneficial.

But let me aſk, what paſſage was engaging your attention this afternoon?

Aſp. The great orator's treatiſe concerning the *nature of the divine* BEING *: that part eſpecially, which proves his exiſtence and perfections, from the formation of the *human body*.

Ther. And don't you perceive, that he is almoſt as deficient in the knowledge of his ſubject, as he is miſtaken in his ideas of the ſupreme CAUSE?—The exquiſite contrivance and inimitable workmanſhip of the human frame, were, in thoſe early ages, but dimly diſcerned. It was the *infancy* of anatomy; when the very profeſſors had ſcarcely the qualifications of a modern pupil. Many of the received notions were childiſh, almoſt all of them ſuperficial.

Aſp. Will my *Theron* then entertain me with a more accurate deſcription of this wonderful ſtructure?

Ther. How could you take occaſion, *Aſpaſio*, from the hint I dropped, to conceive any ſuch expectation? It is one thing to *diſcover*, another to *correct*, what is amiſs. Many ſpectators can point out an accidental defect in ſome celebrated ſtatue, or a ſmall indelicacy in ſome valuable piece of painting, who are abſolutely incapable of retouching the one, or ſupplying the other.

Aſp. Since we are fallen upon this point, you muſt give

* *De natura deorum.*

give me leave to renew and urge my requeſt. I ſhall be extremely glad to hear your remarks upon the ſubject; eſpecially as you have made this branch of ſcience, a part of your amuſement; and not without the advantage of *anatomical* diſſections. Whereas I have very ſeldom applied my thoughts to the former, and never had an opportunity of being preſent at the latter.

Let me alſo obſerve, that our very ſituation favours, or rather ſuggeſts ſuch a topic of converſation, All the fine proſpects of the country are excluded. We have ſcarce any thing left, but *ourſelves*, to contemplate. And ſhall this be the only theme we neglect?

Ther. It is ſomewhat prepoſterous, I muſt confeſs, to pry into the archives of colleges; to ranſack the cabinets of the *virtuoſi;* to carry our ſearch through the whole compaſs of external nature; and, at the ſame time, overlook the far more ſurpriſing curioſities which abound in the compoſition of our own bodies.

Since you inſiſt upon it, my obſervations, crude and extemporaneous as they are, ſhall ſubmit themſelves to your judgment; provided you will be content to receive only a *few* of the *outlines*, and nothing like a *finiſhed* draught.

Aſp. Let me juſt hint, that the more *circumſtantial* your account is, ſo much the more welcome will it be to your friend, and ſo much the more honourable to our common CREATOR. For I really think, that *Galen*'s declaration upon this head is perfectly juſt; which I have read in my favourite commentator *Beza*, and which ſpeaks to the following effect *.— "Such treatiſes as diſplay the excellencies of the great "CREATOR, compoſe one of the nobleſt and moſt "*acceptable* hymns. To acquaint ourſelves with his "ſublime perfections; and point out to others his in-

"finite

* *Vid.* Bez. Annot. ad *Rom.* i. 20.

" finite power, his unerring wisdom, and his bound-
" less benignity; this is a more *substantial* act of de-
" votion, than to slay hecatombs of victims at his al-
" tar, or kindle mountains of spices into incense."—
Theron, after pausing a few minutes, thus resumed the discourse.

Ther. When some master-builder undertakes to erect a magnificent edifice, he begins with the less decorated, but more solid parts; those which are to *support*, or those which are to *contain* the rest. This order, if you please, we will follow, in considering " the earthly house of our tabernacle *."

First, you have a system of *bones*, cast into a variety of moulds, enlarged or contracted into a variety of sizes. All *strong*, that they may commodiously bear up the fleshy machine; yet *light*, that they may not depress the animal with an encumbering load.—*Bored* with an internal cavity, to contain the moistening marrow; and *perforated* with exceedingly-fine ducts, to admit the nourishing vessels.—Insensible themselves, they are *covered* with a membrane † of exquisite sensibility: which warns them of the approach, and secures them from the annoyance, of any injurious friction; and, at the same time, preserves the muscular parts from being fretted in their action, by the hard and rough substance of the bones.—Their *figures* are always most precisely fitted to their uses. They are generally

* 2 *Cor.* v. 1. St *Paul* very pertinently compares the bodily structure to *a house;* and adds, in that strain of godly edifying, which runs through all his writings, our *earthly and tent-like* habitation, ἐπίγειος οἰκία τοῦ σκήνους. Referring to its *mean original*, as it was formed out of the dust; and to its *short continuance*, as it must soon return to dust again. Being, tho' commodious as a house, yet transitory as a tent: not like the *everlasting mountains*, which stand fixed and rooted to the centre; but like those *portable tenements*, which are set up in the evening, are taken down in the morning, and then their place is known no more.

† The *periosteum.*

generally larger at the extremities, than in the middle; that they may be joined more firmly, and not so easily dislocated.—The manner of their *articulation* is truly admirable *, and remarkably various; yet never varied, without demonstrating some wise design, and answering some valuable end. Frequently when two are united, the one is nicely rounded, and capped with a smooth substance; the other is scooped into a hollow of the same dimensions, to receive the polished knob; and both are lubricated with an unctuous fluid, to yield the readiest rotation in the socket.

The *feet* compose the firmest and neatest pedestal; infinitely beyond all that statuary or architecture can accomplish; capable of altering its form, and extending its size, as different circumstances require. Besides performing the office of a pedestal, they contain a set of the nicest springs; which help to place the body in a variety of graceful attitudes, and qualify it for a multiplicity of advantageous motions.—The undermost part of the heel, and the extremity of the sole, are shod with a tough, insensible, sinewy substance. This we may call a kind of *natural sandal*. It never wears out, never wants repair, and always prevents that undue compression of the vessels, which the weight of the body, in walking or standing, might otherwise occasion.—The *legs* and *thighs* are like substantial and stately columns †; articulated in such a manner,

* *Mirabiles commissuras habent.* Cic.

† Styled therefore by the sacred philosopher, *the strong men*, Eccl. xii. 3.; and compared, by the same beautiful writer, to *pillars of marble*. Cant. v. 15.—As these are the strongest parts of the body, and the support of all the other, hence I presume arose that *proverbial* expression, which occurs in the history of *Samson*, שׁוק על ירך Judg. xv. 8. rendered by the *Septuagint*, not very exactly, κνημην επι μηρον; by our *English* translators, rather too vulgarly, *hip and thigh*. I believe, the word שׁוק signifies here, as it certainly signifies in many other places, what the *Latins* call *armus*; and that the image is taken from some robust

manner, that they adminiſter moſt commodiouſly to the act of walking, yet obſtruct not the eaſy poſture of ſitting. The legs ſwell out, towards the top, with a genteel projection; and are wrought off, towards the bottom with neat diminutions. Which variation leſſens their bulk, at the ſame time that it increaſes their beauty.

The *ribs*, turned into a regular arch, are gently moveable, for the act of reſpiration. They form a ſecure lodgment for the lungs and the heart; which, being ſome of the moſt diſtinguiſhed and important organs of life, have their reſidence fortified by this ſtrong ſemicircular rampart *.—The *backbone* is intended, not only to ſtrengthen the body, and ſuſtain its moſt capacious ſtore-rooms; but alſo to bring down that communication of the brain, which is uſually termed the *ſpinal marrow*. As an open channel, it conveys, as a well-cloſed caſe, it guards this vital ſilver †; and, by ſeveral commodious outlets, tranſmits the animating treaſure into all the inferior parts. Had it only been large, ſtrait, and hollow, it might have ſerved theſe ſeveral purpoſes. But then the loins muſt have been inflexible, and every man impaled (not by the executioner, but by nature) on a ſtake co-eval with his exiſtence. To avoid which, it conſiſts of very ſhort bones, cloſely knit together by intervening cartilages. This peculiarity of ſtructure prevents diſlocation; and give

buſt and fierce animal, whoſe *ſhoulders* before, and whoſe *thighs* behind, are broken in pieces. Then what miſchief can he do? what reſiſtance can he make? He is utterly diſabled. So that the expreſſion ſeems to denote, (and might perhaps, without violence to the original, be tranſlated) *a total overthrow*.

* *Thou haſt fenced me*, ſecured my inward and vital parts *with bones and ſinews*, Job x. 11.—*Crates pectoris*, is *Virgil's* expreſſion.

† This is ſuppoſed to be the part, which *Solomon* deſcribes by *the ſilver cord:* and is indeed like a cord, on account of its *ſhape*; like ſilver, on account of its *colour*, Eccl. xii. 6.

gives the main pillar of our frame the *pliancy* of an *oſier*, even while it retains the *firmneſs* of an *oak*.—By this means, it is a kind of continued joint; capable of various inflections, without bruiſing the ſoft medullary ſubſtance, which fills its cavity; without intercepting the nervous fluid, which is to be detached from this grand reſervoir; or diminiſhing that ſtrength, which is neceſſary to ſupport all the upper ſtories.—A formation ſo very peculiar in any other of the ſolids, muſt have been attended with great inconveniences. Here it is unſpeakably ſerviceable; is both for workmanſhip and ſituation, a maſterpiece of creating ſkill, never enough to be admired.

The *arms*, pendent on either ſide, are exactly proportioned to each other; that the equilibrium of the ſtructure may not be diſconcerted. Theſe, being the guards which defend *, and the miniſters which ſerve the whole body, are fitted for the moſt *diverſified* and *extenſive* operations; firm with bone, yet not weighty with fleſh; and capable of performing, with ſingular expedition and eaſe, all manner of uſeful motions. They bend inwards, and turn outwards; they riſe upwards, and ſtoop downwards; they wheel about, and throw themſelves into whatever direction we pleaſe.—To theſe are annexed the *hands*; and all terminated by the *fingers*: which are, not like the arms, of the ſame length, and of an equal bigneſs; but in both reſpects different: which gives them a more graceful appearance, and a much greater degree of uſefulneſs. Were they all fleſh, they would be *comparatively* impotent; were they one entire bone, they would be *utterly* inflexible: but conſiſting of various little bones, and a multitude of muſcles, what ſhape can they not aſſume? what ſervice can they not perform?—Being placed at the end of the arm, the ſphere of their action

* Called, in *Solomon*'s figurative but elegant ſketch of anatomy, *the keepers of the houſe*, Eccl. xii. 3.

tion is exceedingly enlarged. This advantageous ſituation realizes the fable of *Briareus;* and renders a pair of hands as ſerviceable as an hundred.—The extremities of the fingers are an aſſemblage of fine tendinous fibres, moſt acutely ſenſible *: which, notwithſtanding the delicacy of their texture, are deſtined to almoſt inceſſant employ, and frequently exerciſed among rugged objects. For this reaſon, they are overlaid with the *nails*, a ſort of horny expanſion; which, like a ferule, hinders the fleſh from being ungracefully flattened; and, like a ſheath †, preſerves the tender parts from injurious impreſſions.

In the miniſtry of the hands, and activity of the fingers, we poſſeſs a caſe of the *fineſt inſtruments*, or a collection of the *nobleſt utenſils;* qualifying us for the execution of every work, which the projecting genius can deviſe, or the laviſh fancy crave.—To theſe we are obliged for the beautiful ſtatues, which have often entertained our eyes, in yonder ſolitary walks; and even for that melodious trumpet, which now addreſſes our ears, from the ſummer-houſe on the fiſh-pond.—Theſe raiſe the lofty column, and turn the ſpacious arch. Theſe ſwell the majeſtic dome, and adjuſt the commodious apartment. Architecture, with all her ſtriking beauties, and all her rich benefits, are the creation of the human hand.—Yielding to the ſtrength of the hand, the talleſt firs fall to the ground, and the largeſt oaks deſcend from the mountains. Faſhioned by

* So very acute is the ſenſibility of theſe parts, that, I am informed, it furniſhes the *tribunal* of *inquiſition* with one of the moſt refined expedients in the *art* of *torture*. A ſtrong quill, ſharpened by the penknife, and dipped in ſome inflammable liquor, is thruſt deep between the nail and the finger. When the quill has cut its way through the ſhivering nerves; and ſtands planted, like a dagger, amidſt the guſhing blood; ſome barbarous hand ſets fire to the extremity. The keen point, the ſlow flame, and both in the ſeat of the moſt lively ſenſation, put the miſerable ſufferer to the *moſt excruciating* pain.

† *Digitis munimina.*

by the dexterity of the hand, they accommodate the ſailor with a *floating warehouſe;* and circulate, from *Britain* to *Japan*, the productions of nature, and the improvements of art.—Obedient to the human hand, metals aſcend from their ſubterranean beds; and compoſe the moſt ſubſtantial parts of that *curious machine* ‡, which tranſmits far and near, to the monarch's palace, and to the peaſant's hut, ſuch treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, as *the gold and cryſtal cannot equal* †.

Among the *Egyptians*, the hand was the ſymbol of ſtrength; among the *Romans*, it was an emblem of fidelity; and I think, it may, among all nations, be looked upon as the enſign of *authority*. It is the original and the univerſal ſceptre; that which not only repreſents, but aſcertains our dominion, over all the elements, and over every creature.—Tho' providence has not given us the ſtrength of the horſe, the ſwiftneſs of the greyhound, or the ſagacious ſcent of the ſpaniel; yet, directed by the underſtanding, and enabled by the hand, we can ſubject them to our will; turn them to our advantage; and, in this ſenſe, make them all *our own*.—Theſe hands (ſurpriſing to relate!) theſe *ſhort* hands have found out a way, whereby they can dive to the bottom of the ocean; can penetrate the bowels of the earth; and reach from ſhore to ſhore. Theſe *feeble* hands can manage the wings of the wind; can arm themſelves with the rage of the fire; and preſs into their ſervice the forcible impetuoſity of the waters.—How eminent is the dignity! how extenſive the agency of the hand! It would require more eloquence, than your orator poſſeſſed, to diſplay the former; and more pages than your book contains, to deſcribe the latter.—How greatly then are we indebted to our indulgent CREATOR, for accommodating us with this noble, this diſtinguiſhing, this invaluable member!

‡ The printing-preſs. † Job xxviii. 17.

Above all, is the *head;* a majeſtic dome, deſigned for the reſidence of the brain. It is framed in exact conformity to this important purpoſe; ample, to receive it; ſtrong, to uphold it; and firm, to defend it.—As the head reſembles the *general*'s tent in an army, or the *monarch*'s palace in a city; it has a communication eſtabliſhed with all, even the moſt inferior and remote, parts of the ſyſtem: has outlets and avenues, for the ready diſpatch of couriers to all quarters; and for the reception of ſpeedy intelligence, on every intereſting occaſion. It is furniſhed with lodgments, wherein to poſt centinels of various characters, and appointed for various offices.—To expedite their operations; whether they are employed in reconnoitring what paſſes *without*, or examining what claims admittance *within;* the whole turns upon a curious pivot, moſt nicely contrived, to afford the largeſt and freeſt circumvolutions.

This ſtately capital is ſcreened from heat; defended from cold; and at the ſame time very much beautified, by a copious growth of *hair:* which flows down from the parted forelock in decent curls; and hangs, mantling on the cheeks, cluſtering on the ſhoulders.—A decoration *, incomparably more *delicate*, than any or all the orders of architecture can ſupply;

* *Abſalom*'s hair was reckoned a diſtinguiſhing part of his beauty, 2 *Sam.* xiv. 26.—The amiableneſs of the church, in the exemplary converſation of true believers, is diſplayed by the ſame ornament. *Thy hair is as a flock of goats, that* are ſeen afar off, and *appear* in a pendent attitude *from* the ſummit of *mount Gilead;* moſt agreeably adorning the place, and detaining the ſpectator's eye. *Cant.* iv. 1. I prefer the expoſition of *Arias Montanus*, שרש *quæ pendent, quæ prominent:* as it takes in a circumſtance, which correſponds with the *penſile* poſition of the hair; renders the compariſon more *full* and *exact;* and is, according to the obſervation of a moſt accurate judge, one of the chief *remarkables* in ſuch a proſpect;

Non ego vos poſthac, viridi projectus in antro,
Dumoſa pendere procul de rupe videbo. VIRG.

ſupply; and ſo perfectly *light*, that it no way encumbers or incommodes the wearer.

While many animals creep on the ground; while all of them are prone in their poſture, or their aſpect; the attitude of man is *erect*.—Which is by far the moſt *graceful*, has an air of dignity, and beſpeaks ſuperiority.—It is by far the moſt *commodious*; fits us for the proſecution of every grand ſcheme, and facilitates the ſucceſs of all our extenſive deſigns.—It is likewiſe attended with the greateſt *ſafety;* being, if not leſs than any other poſition expoſed to dangers, yet more happily contrived to repel or avoid them.

Aſp. May it not likewiſe be intended to remind us of our exalted original, and our ſublime end? Our *original*, which was the breath of the ALMIGHTY, and the ſpirit of the MOST HIGH. Our *end*, which is not the ſoil we tread on, or any of its low productions, but the heaven of heavens, and the *things that are above*.

But not to divert from our ſubject; which, in my friend's manner of handling it, is as entertaining, as it is inſtructive.—The bones (to carry on your alluſion) are only the *rafters*, the *beams*, the *ſhell* of the living edifice. You have raiſed the walls, and laid the floors; you have made the proper diviſions, and left the neceſſary apertures. But, in every finiſhed houſe, the roof is covered, and the rooms are wainſcotted. The ſaſhes are hung, and the doors turn upon their hinges. The grates are fixed, and the ſtairs aſcend. *Within*, the lodgings are furniſhed; *without*, the front is ornamented, All is rendered commodious for domeſtic uſe, and graceful to the external view.

Ther. This likewiſe is executed hy the great, the divine ARTIFICER.—Here are *ligaments;* a tough and ſtrong arrangement of fibres; to unite the ſeveral limbs; and render, what would otherwiſe be a diſ-

jointed

jointed unwieldy jumble, a well-compacted and self-manageable system.—*Membranes;* or thin and flexile tunicles; appointed to enwarp the fleshy parts; to form a connection between some, and make a separation between others *.

Arteries, the rivers of our little world †, or the aqueducts of the organized metropolis. Some of which ascend to the head; others spread themselves over the shoulders; some extend to the arms; some descend to the feet; and striking out, as they go, into numberless smaller canals, visit the streets, the alleys, and every *individual* apartment of the vital city.—These, being wide at their origin, and lessening as they branch themselves, check the rapid impetus of the blood. To sustain this shock, they are endued with uncommon strength: by performing this service, they oblige the crimson current to pass into the *narrowest defiles*, and distribute itself into all quarters.—The blood, thrown from the heart, dilates the arteries, and their own elastic force contracts them. By which means, they *vibrate*, in proper places, very perceivably against the finger; bring advices of the utmost importance to the physician; and very much assist him, both in discovering the nature of diseases, and prescribing for their respective cures.—The larger arteries, where-ever the body is formed for incurvation, are situate on the *bending* side; lest, being stretched to an improper length by the inflection, their dimensions should be lessened and the circulating fluid retarded.—They are not, like several of the considerable veins, laid so near the surface, as to be protrusive of the skin; but are deposited to a *proper depth* in the flesh. This situation renders them more secure from external injuries. It conceals

* The intestines are *fastened* to each other by the *mesentery*. The breast is *divided* into two cavities by the *mediastinum*. Both which are reckoned among the membranes.

† A human body was called by the ancients, the *microcosm*; that is, a little world, or the world in miniature.

ceals likewiſe thoſe ſtarts and reſilitions of the pulſe, which, if apparent, would diſcompoſe the moſt ſedate, and disfigure the moſt comely countenance. Could we caſt our eye upon the river, which runs through the neighbouring meadow, we might obſerve ſeveral mills interſecting the ſtream. The waters at thoſe places, if not entirely ſtopped, drain away very ſlowly. In conſequence of this obſtruction, the lower channels would be ſunk dry, and the upper ones ſwelled into a flood. To obviate both theſe inconveniencies, *low-ſhots* are provided; which, carrying off the ſurcharge, prevent a glut above, and ſupply the banks below. In thoſe parts of the body, which are moſt liable to preſſure, much the ſame expedient takes place. The arteries *inoſculate;* or, breaking into a new track, they fetch a little circuit, in order to return and communicate again with the main road. So that, if any obſtacle blocks up or ſtraitens the direct paſſage; the current, by diverting to this new channel, eludes the impediment; maintains an uninterrupted flow; and ſoon regains its wonted courſe.

Veins are appointed to receive the blood from the arteries, and reconvey it to the heart.—Small at their riſe, and enlarging as they advance, they are void of any pulſation. In theſe the preſſure of the circulating fluid is not near ſo forcible as in the arterial tubes: for which reaſon, their texture is conſiderably ſlighter. Such an exact *œconomiſt* is nature, even amidſt all her *liberality* *!—In many of theſe canals, the current, though widening continually, and acquiring a proportionable increaſe of gravity, is obliged to puſh its way againſt the perpendicular. By which circumſtance, it is expoſed to the hazard of falling back, and overloading the veſſels, if not of ſuppreſſing the animal motion. For a ſecurity againſt this danger, *valves*

* A parallel inſtance of frugality is obſervable in the arteries: whoſe coats are ſpun *thinner*, as the diameter of the veſſels becomes *ſmaller*, and the preſſure of the blood *weaker*.

valves are interposed at proper distances: which are no hinderance to the regular passage, but prevent the reflux, sustain the augmented weight, and facilitate a progress to the grand receptacle. This auxiliary contrivance comes in, where the blood is constrained to climb; but is dismissed where the steep ascent ceases, and such a precaution would be needless.

Here are *glands*, whose office it is to filtrate the passing fluid. Each of these glands is an assemblage of vessels, complicated and intervolved, with seeming confusion, but with perfect regularity. As some kind of sieves transmit the dust, and retain the corn; others bolt out the meal, and hold back the bran; so some of these glandulous strainers draw off the finest, others the grossest parts of the blood. Some, like the distiller's alembic, *sublimate* *; others, like the common sewers, *defecate* †. Each forms a secretion, far more curious than the most admired operations of chemistry; yet all necessary for the support of life, or conducive to the comfort of the animal.—*Muscles*, wove in nature's nicest loom; composed of the slenderest fibres, yet endued with incredible strength; fashioned after a variety of patterns, but all in the highest taste for elegance, conveniency, and usefulness.—These, with their *tendons* annexed, constitute the instruments of motion. The former, contracting their substance, operate somewhat like the pulley in mechanics. The latter, resembling the cord, are fastened to a bone, or some partition of flesh; and, following the muscular contraction,

* The glandulous substance of the *brain*, which secretes the animal spirits.

† The *liver* and *kidneys*. The former of which separates the *gall*; the latter drains off a *fluid*, which, being sufficiently known, need not be named. I could wish, it had not been so explicitly and coarsely mentioned in our translation of the best of books; but that we had rendered the original, in 1 *Kings* xiv. 10. *Every male*; in *Is.* xxxvi. 12. *Eat and drink their own excrements.*

contraction, actuate the part into which they are inſerted. This, and all their functions they execute, not like a ſluggiſh beaſt of burden, but quick as the lightning.—*Nerves*, ſurpriſingly-minute tubes; derived from the brain, and permeated by an exquiſitely-ſubtile fluid: which, gliding into the muſcles, ſets them on work; diffuſes the power of ſenſation through the body; or, returning upon any impreſſion from without, gives all needful intelligence to the ſoul.—*Veſicles*, diſtended with an unctuous matter, in ſome places compoſe a ſoft cuſhion * for nature; in other places, they fill up her vacuities, and ſmooth the inequalities of the fleſh. *Inwardly*, they ſupple the ſeveral movements of the active machine; *outwardly*, they render its appearance plump, well proportioned, and graceful.

The *ſkin*, like a curious ſurtout †, exactly fitted, is ſuperinduced over the whole. Formed of the moſt delicate net-work; whoſe meſhes ‡ are minute, and whoſe threads ‖ are multiplied even to a prodigy.—

The

* The *calf* of the *leg*, for inſtance: whoſe large collection of muſcles, intermingled with fat, is of ſingular ſervice to thoſe important bones. It flanks and fortifies them, like a *ſtrong baſtion*. It ſupports and cheriſhes them, like a *ſoft pillow*. And what is no leſs pleaſing to obſerve, it accommodates and defends them on that very ſide where they moſt frequently reſt their weight, and where they are leaſt capable of being guarded by the eye.

† *Thou haſt clothed me with ſkin and fleſh*, Job x. 11.—The word *ſurtout* is uſed according to the *French* etymology; ſignifies a garment, coming *over the whole* body; and is moſt beautifully expreſſed by our LORD's ἀμφιεννυσι, Matth. vi. 30.

‡ The pores of the *cuticula*.

‖ The nervous fibres, and other veſſels of the *cutis*.—Nature is ſomewhat like *Solomon*'s virtuous woman *who is not afraid of the ſnow for her houſehold, becauſe her houſehold are clothed in ſcarlet*; or, as it may be rendered, are clothed *with pairs*, have two coats a-piece, *Prov.* xxxi. 21. (See *Gen.* vi.

The meſhes ſo *minute*, that nothing paſſes them, which is diſcernable by the eye; though they diſcharge, every moment, myriads and myriads of ſuperfluous incumbrances from the body. The ſteam ariſing from the warm buſineſs tranſacted within, is carried off by theſe real, though imperceptible funnels *. Which conſtitutes what we uſually call *inſenſible perſpiration*. —The threads ſo *multiplied*, that neither the point of the ſmalleſt needle, nor the incomparably-nicer ſpear of a gnat, nor even the inviſible lancet of a flea, can pierce any ſingle part, without cauſing an uneaſy ſenſation and a ſuffuſion of blood; conſequently, without wounding, even by ſo ſmall a puncture, both a nerve and a vein †.

The

19, 20. where the word עור occurs in this ſignification.)—The body alſo is accommodated with a double covering. The *outermoſt* is that ſoft whitiſh tegument, which riſes in the puſtule of a bliſter. The *innermoſt* is that reddiſh and exquiſitely-tender part which appears when the bliſter is broke, and the dead ſkin taken off.—The firſt is void of ſenſe, and intended to ſcreen the ſecond, not only from the ſtroke of injuries, but even from the impreſſions of the air, which, mild as it may feel to the *ſheathed*, would be too rough and ſharp for the *naked* nerves.

There ſeems to be an alluſion to this particular in that remarkable expreſſion, *Skin for ſkin*, עור בעד עור Job ii. 4. *Skin even unto ſkin*; the very inmoſt ſkin, which cannot be taken away without the greateſt loſs, and ſevereſt pain. Yet, even this *loſs* a man would ſuffer, this *pain* he would endure, in order to preſerve *precious* life.

* Theſe are ſomewhere prettily ſtyled *cutaneous chimneys;* and no wonder they are imperceptible, if, as Mr *Lewenhoeck* affirms, a ſingle grain of ſand will cover no leſs than 125,000.

† A *blood-veſſel* at leaſt. Compared with theſe veſſels, the fine *filmy threads*, which, on ſome bright autumnal morning, float in the air, or hang on the ſtubble, muſt be large as a bell-rope, or *bulky* as a cable.—Such tubes, one would think, ſhould *burſt* at every breath we draw, or even *break* with their own fineneſs. Yet they are the conduit-pipes, which convey the vital fluid from and to the grand reſervoir. And ſo exquiſite, ſo admirable is their texture, that they will outlaſt the ſtrength of lead, or the heart of oak; *theſe* wearing away, *thoſe* growing ſtronger, by uſe.

The veins, either pervading or lying parallel with this fine tranſparent coat, *beautify* the human ſtructure; thoſe parts eſpecially, which are moſt conſpicuous, and intended for publick view. The pliant wriſt and the taper arm, they variegate with an inlay of living ſapphire. They ſpread vermilion over the lips *, and plant roſes in the cheeks. While the eye, tinged with gloſſy jet, or ſparkling with the blue of heaven, is fixed in an orb of poliſhed cryſtal. Inſomuch that the earthly tabernacle exhibits the niceſt proportions, and richeſt graces; ſuch *nice proportions*, as afford the moſt correct model for ſtatuary; ſuch *rich graces*, as the canvas never bore, as painting imitates in vain.

Aſp. How juſt in itſelf, and how pertinent to our purpoſe, is that well-known acknowledgment of the ſacred and royal anatomiſt; "*I am curiouſly wrought* †! "There is a variety, a regularity, and an elegance, "in the texture of my body; in the formation and "arrangement of theſe bones and muſcles, theſe veins "and arteries;—reſembling, ſhall I ſay?—rather, "infinitely ſurpaſſing, the moſt coſtly and admired "pieces of embroidery."

It is one of the fineſt ſimilitudes, which the whole circle of polite arts could afford. Yet every compariſon, fetched from the performances of mankind, muſt neceſſarily debaſe the noble ſubject. All the enrichments which the needle can give, or the moſt *ſplendid ſilks* receive, are rude, are coarſe, are mere

 ſackcloth,

* *Thy lips are like a thread of ſcarlet*, Cant. iv. 3. Like a *thread*, for their delicate *ſhape*; like a thread of *ſcarlet*, for their glowing *colour*.

† The origin רקמה ſignifies *finely wrought*, or *elegantly flouriſhed with a needle*.—The tranſlation adopted by our liturgy is, in this place, flat and inexpreſſive. The *Engliſh* word *faſhioned*, has juſt the ſame inferiority to the beautiful *Hebrew* phraſe; as the *badge*, tacked upon ſome poor penſioner's coat, has to the *ſtar* embroidered on a nobleman's breaſt, *Pſal.* cxxxix. 14.

ſackcloth, when ſet in oppoſition to the exquiſite delicacy of the fleſhly web. As indeed all the celebrated *palaces*, *amphitheatres*, *temples*, which ever adorned the moſt magnificent cities in the world, are but a heap of confuſion, if compared with the ſymmetry and beauty of the bodily fabric.—And, what is beyond meaſure marvellous, all theſe wonders of mechaniſm and decoration aroſe,—not from the purer elements,—not from the more refined parts of the creation,—but from the *duſt* of the ground *. How eaſily, *Theron*, can that ſtupendous ARTIFICER *renew* our hearts, and transform our ſouls into his own image, who could raiſe ſuch delicate and ſtately edifices from particles—deſpicable particles of the trodden ſoil!

I could not forbear interpoſing this remark: becauſe it tends to manifeſt our CREATOR's glory, to encourage our hopes, and ſtrengthen our faith. Otherwiſe, I ſhould be angry with myſelf, for interrupting your diſcourſe.—Pray go on with your deſcription of the animal œconomy. Only let me obſerve, that ſuch a courſe of inceſſant action muſt *exhauſt* the fluids; muſt *waſte* the ſolids; and, unleſs both are ſupplied with proper recruits, muſt gradually weaken, and at length totally deſtroy, the machine.

Ther. For this reaſon, it is furniſhed with the organs, and endued with the powers of *nutrition*.—*Teeth*; the foremoſt, thin and ſharp; fitted to bite aſunder the food, or cut † off ſuch a portion, as the mouth can conveniently manage. The hindermoſt, broad and ſtrong; indented like the ſurface of a milſtone ‡, with

* *The LORD GOD formed man of the duſt of the ground*, Gen. ii. 7.

† Called therefore, *inciſivi*.

‡ Styled accordingly, *molares*.—We find neither of theſe kinds in the new-born babe. As milk is, for a conſiderable time, its appointed food, teeth would be of no ſervice to the

with ſmall cavities, and jagged with little aſperities: which qualify them to grind in pieces whatever is tranſmitted to their operation.—Were the teeth, like our other bones, covered with the uſual membrane, the act of *chewing* would always occaſion great uneaſineſs; and when any hard ſubſtance is eaten, might even lacerate the tender tegument. Were they left without any ſort of covering; they would ſuffer from the inclemencies of the air, and be liable to the penetration of liquors. In which caſe they muſt ſoon become ſoft and unfit for ſervice, or be corrupted, and entirely periſh. To guard againſt theſe diſadvantages, they are curiouſly *glazed*, or overlaid with a neat *enamel*; as white as ivory, and harder than the bone itſelf: which renders them an ornament to the mouth *; ſecures them from various injuries; and exempts them from pain in the office of maſtification.

As the rims and cuſhions of a billiard-table keep the ball from flying off, and ſend it back into the green area, for repeated eſſays of ſkill; ſo the *lips* prevent the food from ſlipping out of the mouth; and, aſſiſted by the tongue, return it to the renewed attrition of the grinders.—While the lips, in concert with the cheeks, are employed in this work, their motion

the infant itſelf. As it is to preſs the tender nipple for this milky ſuſtenance, teeth would be painful and prejudicial to the nurſe. Therefore nature has *poſtponed* the formation of theſe fine implements, till they become both neceſſary and beneficial.

* This ornamental furniture of the mouth, is, in the grand *oriental* manner, deſcribed by *Solomon*; *Thy teeth are like a flock of ſheep, that are even ſhorn, which come up from the waſhing*, Cant. iv. 2. Growing, not ſingle, like the noſe; not in pairs, like the eyes; but in rows conſiderably numerous, *like a flock*.—None riſing higher than the other; none ſtanding unduly prominent beyond another; but all ſet as true, as if they were ranged by the compaſs; and making as regular an appearance, as the flocks *that are even ſhorn*.—They are clean alſo as the fleeces which have no ſpot, and white as the colour of the pureſt wool, like the flocks *juſt come up from the waſhing*.

motion compreſſes the circumjacent glands; and, from innumerable little orifices, a thin *pellucid liquor* exſudes: which moiſtens the attenuated food, and prepares it for more eaſy digeſtion.—When the mouth remains inactive, theſe fountains of ſpittle are, in a manner, cloſed. But when it is exerciſed, either in ſpeaking or eating, their moiſture then being peculiarly neceſſary, they never fail to give out a ſufficient quantity.

When the ſoldier charges his carbine, the cartridge could not make its way to the bottom, without the protruſion of the rammer *. Neither would the food, which we receive at the mouth, deſcend by the force of its own weight, through a narrow and clammy channel, into the ſtomach. To effectuate therefore, and expedite its paſſage, muſcles, both *ſtrait* and *circular*, are provided. The former enlarge the cavity of the throat, and afford a more eaſy admittance; the latter,

* This, and the other ſimilitudes, are undoubtedly *too mean* for the noble occaſion. Neither do they, in *every* circumſtance, quadrate with the functions deſcribed. The motion of the muſcles, which miniſter to the act of deglutition, is different from the perpendicular protruſion of the rammer. And it is mentioned, only to demonſtrate the neceſſity of *ſome propelling* force, in order to convey the aliment into the proper receptacle.

When we deſcant upon a ſubject of ſuch extenſive contrivance, and ſuch finiſhed perfection, as the human ſtructure; it is ſcarce poſſible to find ſimilitudes, that will correſpond in *all* particulars, or that can riſe to the *dignity* of the original. Yet if they tend, in any tolerable degree, to explain its formation, to diſplay its uſes, and render its wonderful œconomy ſomewhat more intelligible, perhaps they may be allowed to take place.

I hope, it will be remembered, that *Theron* ſpeaks, not as an adept in the ſcience, but as one whoſe higheſt pretenſions are, to admire the work, and adore the ARTIFICER. Which acknowledgment may entitle him to ſome candid indulgence, in caſe he ſhould offend againſt the *preciſe anatomical* exactneſs, either of ſentiment, or expreſſion.

latter, closing behind the descending aliment, press it downwards, and finish the deglutition.—Before the food enters the gullet, it must of necessity pass over the orifice of the *windpipe;* consequently, must be in very imminent danger of falling upon the lungs. Which would, if not entirely obstruct the breath, yet occasion violent coughing *, and great inconveniencies. To obviate this evil, the all-foreseeing CONTRIVER has placed a *moveable lid*, or hung a *cartilaginous drawbridge* †: which, when any the smallest particle of food advances to enter the stomach, is pulled down and shut close; but the very moment the morsel is swallowed, it is set loose and stands open. By this twofold artifice, the important passage is always barred and made sure, against any noxious approaches; yet is always left free for the necessary accession of air, and commodious for the purposes of respiration.

When the maltster prepares his grain for the transmutations of the brewhouse; he suffers it to lie several hours steeping in the cistern, before it is fit to be spread upon the floor, or dried on the kilne. The meat and drink likewise must remain a considerable time in the *stomach*, before they are of a proper consistence and temperature, either for the tender coats, or the delicate operation of the bowels. For which purpose, that great receiver is made—strong to bear, —capacious to hold,—and so curiously contrived, as to lay a *temporary embargo* ‡ upon its contents. Here they are lodged in the very centre of warmth, and concocted by the most kindly combination of heat and humidity. Here they are saturated with other fermenting

* This is what we experience, when, in eating or drinking, any thing goes (as is commonly, and not improperly said) *the wrong way.*

† Called the *epiglottis.*

‡ Which is quite *contrary* to the œconomy of the gullet; tho' they are not only contiguous to each other, but a continuation of the *same* tube.

menting or diluting juices; and are kneaded, as it were, by the motion of the ſtomach, and compreſſion of the neighbouring parts. So that every the minuteſt fragment is ſeparated; the whole is reduced to a *tenuity*, abundantly finer than the exacteſt grinding could effect; and all is worked up into the ſmootheſt, moſt *nicely-mixed* pulp imaginable.—From hence it is diſlodged by a gently-acting force; and paſſes, by a gradual tranſition, into the cavity of the inteſtines.

Near the entrance, punctual as a porter in his lodge, waits the *gall-bladder* *; ready to transfuſe its acrimonious, but ſalutary juices, on the advancing aliment: which *diſſolve* its remaining viſcidities; *ſcour* the paſſage of the inteſtines; and keep all its fine apertures clear.—This bag, as the ſtomach fills, is elevated by the diſtention; as the ſtomach empties, is proportionably depreſſed. The former poſture brings on a diſcharge, the latter occaſions a ſuppreſſion of the *bile*. It is furniſhed alſo with a valve, of a very peculiar, but moſt convenient form †; through which the deterſive liquid cannot haſtily pour, but muſt gently ooze.—Admirable conſtruction! which, without any care or conſciouſneſs of ours, prohibits an *immoderate* effuſion, yet aſcertains the *needful* ſupply.

Sufficiently charged with this adventitious fluid, the nutritive maſs purſues its way through the *inteſtines*. Whoſe wonderful meanders are incomparably more curious, than the mazes of the *Dædalean* labyrinth. They are actuated with a worm-like or undulatory motion ‡; which protrudes the received aliment, and forces its fine milky particles into the *lacteal veſſels*. Theſe are a ſeries of the moſt delicate *ſtrainers*; ranged, in countleſs multitudes, all along the

* The *gall-bladder* is ſituate upon the lower margin of the liver; and to ſecrete the *bilious* juice, is ſuppoſed to be the principal uſe of that largeſt of glands.

† A *ſpiral* form.

‡ Styled *vermicular* or *periſtaltic*.

the ſides of the winding paſſage. Each ſo nicely framed, as to admit the nutrimental balmy juices, and reject the groſs excrementitious dregs.—Had the inteſtines been *ſtrait* and *ſhort*, the food might have gone thro' them, without reſigning a ſufficient quantity of its nouriſhing particles. Therefore this grandeſt of all the vital ducts, is artfully convolved, and greatly extended; to afford nature an opportunity of *ſifting* more thoroughly whatever paſſes, and of detaining whatever may ſerve her purpoſes.—Leſt ſuch lengths of entrails ſhould be entangled among themſelves, or be cumbrous to the wearer, they are packed into the neateſt folds, and lie within a narrow compaſs. They are at leaſt ſix times longer * than the body which contains them. Yet are they *lodged*, not *crouded;* in a *part*, not in the *whole* region of the lower belly; and, amidſt this ſmall ſpace, have ſufficient room to execute the niceſt and moſt important functions.—Though the alimentary ſubſtance can never miſtake its way; yet it may, through ſome accidental impediment, attempt to return backward. In this caſe, a valve intervenes; and renders, what would be extremely pernicious, almoſt always impracticable.—As the whole proceeds in this ſerpentine courſe, it is perpetually ſending off detachments of *nutritious* juices. In conſequence of which, it would loſe its ſoft temperature; might become rugged, and pain the tender parts; perhaps, be hindered from ſliding on to its final exit. To prevent ſuch an obſtruction, glands are poſted in proper places †, and diſcharge a *lubricating* fluid, which

* According to this calculation, they muſt meaſure, in a pretty tall man, more than *thirty-ſix feet*.—The ſubſtance of the bowels, though *thin* to a delicacy, is *ſtrong* to a wonder. The ſkin of an ox-gut, I am told, will endure the blows of the gold-beater's hammer, for many months, nay for ſeveral years.

† In the bowels, which lye neareſt the ſtomach, theſe glands are *ſmaller* or *fewer;* becauſe in thoſe parts the aliment is copiouſly furniſhed with moiſture. Whereas, in the bowels,

which aids the progreſs of the maſs, and renews the ſecretion of the chyle. Till all that remains of the one is clean drawn off; and the other—But here you muſt excuſe me; and for my neglect of farther particularity, your author ſhall make an apology; *Quemadmodum autem reliquiæ cibi depellantur, tum aſtringentibus ſe inteſtinis, tum relaxantibus, haud ſane difficile dictu eſt: ſed tamen pretercundem eſt, ne quid habeat injucunditatis oratio* *.

The *chyle*, drawn off by all the ſecretory orifices, is carried along millions of the fineſt † ducts, and lodged in ſeveral *commodious cells* ‡. As a traveller, by baiting upon the road, and taking proper refreſhment, is better qualified to purſue his journey; ſo the chyle, diverting to thoſe little inns, is mixed with a thin, diluting, watery ſubſtance, which renders it more apt to flow, and more fit for uſe.—From hence it is conveyed to one *common receptacle* ‖, and mounts through a per-

which are more remote from the ſtomach, and receive the food drained of a conſiderable quantity of its chyle, the lubricating glands are either *multiplied* or *enlarged*. A moſt admirable proviſion! apparently diverſified, according to the ſeveral changes of the aliment, yet exactly adapted to the exigences of the animal.

* CICERO *de nat. Deor.*—As *Theron* avoids meddling with a ſubject, which is become uſeleſs and putreſcent. I think myſelf obliged to imitate his *delicacy*. Only I would add one remark in the notes, and ſhall beg leave to expreſs it in *Greek*: that if it ſhould prove, in any degree, diſguſtful; it may have at leaſt, the *negative merit*, not to offend *many* readers.

Επει δε τα αποχωρουντα δυσχερη, απεχεσθε τυς τα των οχετων φυσεις, ὡ απηνιξεν η δυνατον προσωπα απο των αισησεων. SOCRAT. Memorab.

† Fine indeed! ſince their *orifices*, through which they admit the chyle, are not diſcoverable even by the very *beſt microſcopes*. To this prodigiouſly-nice conſtructure it is owing, that nothing enters the ſubſtance of the blood, but what is ſmaller than the ſmalleſt arteries in the ſyſtem; and thereby fitted to paſs through the fineſt capillary veſſels, without cauſing any obſtruction. ‡ The glands of the meſentery.

‖ The *receptaculum chyli*; a reſervatory placed near the left kidney.

a perpendicular tube. When proviſion or ammunition is tranſmitted to an army, it generally paſſes under an eſcort of able troops. As this is the immediate ſupport, and principal nouriſhment of the whole ſyſtem, its convéyance is guarded and aſcertained with peculiar caution. The *perpendicular tube*, not having ſufficient force of its own, is laid contiguous to the great artery; whoſe ſtrong pulſation drives on the creeping fluid; enables it to overcome the ſteep aſcent, and unload its precious treaſure at the very door of the heart. —Here it enters the trunk of a large vein, moſt conveniently opened for its reception. It enters in a *ſlanting* or *oblique* direction. By this method of approach, it avoids thwarting, and coincides with the purple ſtream; which, inſtead of obſtructing its admiſſion, expedites its paſſage; and, inſtead of being a bar to exclude it, becomes a vehicle to waft it.—Its entrance is farther ſecured by a valve, admirably conſtructed, and moſt happily ſituate: which *ſhuts* the aperture againſt the refluent blood, in caſe it ſhould offer to obtrude itſelf; but *opens* a free, ſafe, and eaſy avenue, to introduce this milk, this manna of nature.

The *blood*, thro' every ſtage of its ample circuit, having ſuſtained great expences; being laid under contribution, by every gland in the whole ſyſtem; and having ſupplied myriads of the capillary veſſels with matter for inſenſible perſpiration; muſt be very much impoveriſhed; but is moſt opportunely recruited by this acceſſion of chyle.—Yet tho' *recruited*, it is not *refined*. In its preſent crude ſtate, it is abſolutely unqualified to perform the vital tour, or carry on the animal functions. Therefore, by a grand apparatus of muſcular fibres, it is wafted into the *lungs*; and pours a thouſand, thouſand rills into either lobe.—In the cells, the ſpongy cells of this *amazing laboratory*, it imbibes the influences of the external air; its heterogeneous parts are thoroughly incorporated; and its whole ſubſtance is made cool, ſmooth, and

florid.—Thus improved, thus exalted, it is transmitted to the left ventricle of the HEART; a *strong*, *active*, *indefatigable* * muscle; placed in the very centre of the system. Impelled by this beating engine, part shoots upward; and sweeps, with a bounding impetus, into the head. There it impregnates the prolific fields of the brain; and forms those *subtile spirituous* dews †, which impart sense to every nerve, and communicate motion to every limb. Part flows downward; rolls the reeking current through all the lower quarters; and dispenses the nutrimental stores, even to the meanest member, and the minutest vessel.

Observe, how the stately *Thames*, and the rapid *Rhine*, refresh the forests and the groves; water the towns, which croud their banks; and make the meadows they intersect, laugh and sing. So, only with an incomparably-*richer* fluid, and with infinitely *more numerous* streams, this human river laves the several regions of the body; transfusing vigour, and propagating health, through the whole.

But

* *Indefatigable.*—This is a very *distinguishing*, and no less *amazing* property of the heart. The large muscles of the arm, or the much larger of the thigh, are soon wearied. A day's labour, or a day's journey, will exhaust their strength. But the muscle, which constitutes the heart works through whole weeks, whole months, whole years, and never becomes weary; is equally a stranger to *intermission* and *fatigue*.

† These are, what we call, *the animal spirits*; and it is generally supposed, that sensation is caused by the *undulatory* motion of this nervous fluid.—Though some imagine it is performed by the *vibratory* motion of the nerves themselves.—Others think, that neither of these opinions will comport with the texture of those fine tubes, or with the nature of the fluid they contain.—It is, I believe, one of those *mysteries* in the material world, which may reconcile *thinking* and *unprejudiced* minds to the mysteries of the *Christian* revelation. Why should any one wonder, to find some doctrines in the BIBLE, that surpass the reach of human understanding; when there are so many operations in the body, confessedly and absolutely inexplicable by the most acute anatomist!

But how ſhall a ſtream, divided into myriads of channels, and pervading innumerable tracts, how ſhall this be brought back again to its ſource? Should any portion, like your *lake-waters* after a land-flood, deviate from their courſe, or be unable to return,—putrefaction would take place,—a nuiſance would ariſe,—death might enſue. Therefore the all-wiſe CREATOR has connected the extremity of the arteries, with the beginning of the veins. So that the ſame force, which *darts* the crimſon wave thro' the former, *drives* it thro' the latter. Thus it is reconducted, without the leaſt extravaſation, to the great ſalient ciſtern *. There played off afreſh, it renews and perpetuates the vital functions.

Where two *oppoſite* currents would be in danger of claſhing, a fibrous excreſcence interpoſes †; which, like a projecting pier, breaks the ſtroke of each, and throws both into their proper receptacle.—When the wafture is to be *ſpeedy*, the channels either forbear to wind in their courſe ‡, or to leſſen in their dimenſions ‖. When the progreſs is to be *retarded*, the tubes are twined into various convolutions §, or their diameter is contracted into a narrower ſize.—

Modelled

* *Solomon* makes uſe of this ſimilitude—*Or ever the pitcher be broken at the fountain; or the wheel broken at the ciſtern.* The two *ventricles* of the heart, repleniſhed with blood, are fitly repreſented by a *ciſtern*; and the *contractile* force of their fibres, acts like the *water-wheel* in hydraulics.—The *pitcher*, which receives the water at the ſpring-head, and conveys it away for the owner's ſervice, may probably ſignify the *aorta*, and the *pulmonary* artery; whoſe functions correſpond with the uſes of ſuch a veſſel, *Eccl.* xii. 6.

† In the point, where the ſtreams, from the *vena cava* and *vena aſcendens*, meet.

‡ In the great artery, that deſcends to the feet.

‖ In every interval, between all the ramifications.

§ In the veſſels, which carry the blood to the brain; which form the viſcous ſecrations; and indeed which conſtitute all the glands.

Modelled by these judicious rules, guarded by these wise precautions, the living flood never discontinues its interchangeable tide; but, night and day, whether we sleep or wake, still perseveres to sally *briskly* through the arteries, and return *softly* through the veins.

Such astonishing expedients are used, to elaborate the chyle,—to blend it with the blood, and to distribute both thro' the body; by means of which, the animal constitution is maintained. In youth, its bulk is increased; in age, its decays are repaired; and it is kept in tenantable condition for the soul, during the space of seventy or eighty years.

These are a few, and but a *very few* instances of that contrivance, regularity, and beauty, which are observable in the human frame. Attentive inquirers discover *deeper* footsteps of design, and *more refined* strokes of skill; discover them, not only in the grand and most distinguished parts, but in every limb, and in every organ; I may venture to add, in every fibre that is extended, and in every globule * that flows.

Asp. What a *various*, but *uniform* system, is the body! I see the greatest multiplicity of parts, yet the most perfect harmony subsists between them all. No one hinders, but each assists, the operation of another; and all conspire to the benefit and preservation of the whole.—Most judiciously has the great apostle touched this subject; and most happily applied it, to illustrate the reasonableness, and enforce the practice, both of *personal* and *social* duties, of private content and public concord †.

The

* The extreme *minuteness* of the globules, which form the *red* part of our blood, is one exemplification of this remark; if, as Mr *Lewenhoeck* computes, every globule be 125,000 times smaller than the smallest grain of sand.

† See 1 *Cor.* xii. 12. *&c.*

The body, he obſerves, *is not one member, but many*. To each of which ſome peculiar and needful office is aſſigned. So that the *foot*, tho' placed in the loweſt order, and deſtined to ſerve on the very ground, has no reaſon to reckon itſelf a worthleſs outcaſt; or to ſay, *Becauſe I am not the head, I am not of the body*. Neither has the *head*, in its exalted ſtation, and amidſt its honourable functions, any cauſe to deſpiſe the inferior limbs; or to ſay, with contempt and ſelf-ſufficiency, *I have no need of you*.—If there were no feet, what would become of the locomotive faculty? Or how could the body convey itſelf from one place to another? If there were no hands what ſhould we do for the inſtruments of action? or how could the animal frame be defended and accommodated?—Nay, the parts, *which ſeem to be leſs honourable*, are neceſſary. Even thoſe which form the ſediments, or throw off the dregs, are of the laſt importance to life and its comforts. Should thoſe be obſtructed in their action, the moſt raging torment enſues; ſhould the obſtruction continue, death is the inevitable conſequence.—By this wiſe adjuſtment, *there is no ſchiſm in the body;* no ſeparate or interfering ends are purſued by the members; but the ſafety and ſupport of each are the one undivided care of all.

Thus ſhould it be among men, and among Chriſtians; in the civil community, and in the catholic church. There is in both a *ſubordination* of perſons, but a *concatenation* of intereſts. For which reaſon, a general agreement ſhould take place, and a mutual ſubſerviency to each other's welfare.—The *meaneſt* have no cauſe to be diſſatisfied with their condition; but to acquieſce in the unerring diſpoſal of Providence, and chearfully contribute their ſhare to the common good.—The *higheſt* ſhould condeſcend to men of low eſtate; and maintain a regard to the well-being of the pooreſt, as that which is intimately connected with their own.—In a word, *each* ſhould feel a tender concern

cern for all; rejoicing in their happineſs, and ſtudying to eſtabliſh it; ſympathizing with their miſeries, and endeavouring to heal them.

I am ſure, my *Theron* will be pleaſed with this fine compariſon, uſed by the apoſtle; and adapted to purpoſes, at once ſo noble and ſo benevolent. Eſpecially, as it receives additional propriety and force from his own obſervations.—But I have one more inquiry to make.

Your ſyſtem, tho' *organized*, tho' endued with a principle of *motion*, and furniſhed with the powers of *nutrition*, is ſtill deſtitute of *ſenſe*.—The creation abounds with objects fitted to yield the moſt refined entertainment. The ſun impurples the robe of morning, and ſtars beſpangle the curtains of night. Flowers of ſilver whiteneſs, and of golden luſtre, enamel the ground. Fruits of all radiant hues, and of every delicious taſte, hang amiably dangling on the boughs.

———*Airs alſo, vernal airs,*
Breathing the ſmell of field, and grove, attune
The trembling leaves.

But we hear of no capacities formed for the *enjoyment* of theſe various delights. Without which, the breath of fields muſt loſe its reviving fragrance; the whiſpering grove muſt degenerate into ſullen ſilence; and nature's book of knowledge, all fair and inſtructive, be no better than a vaſt unmeaning blank.

Ther. Therefore the great CREATOR, profuſely gracious to mankind, has made us a preſent, an inеſtimable preſent, of the *ſenſes;* to be the inlets of innumerable pleaſures, and the means of adminiſtering the moſt valuable advantages.

High in the head, bright and conſpicuous as a ſtar in the brow of evening, is placed the *eye*. In this elevated ſituation, like a centinel poſted in his watch-tower, it commands the moſt enlarged proſpect.—Conſiſting only of ſimple fluids, incloſed in thin tunicles,

cles, it conveys to our apprehenſion all the graces of blooming nature, and all the glories of the viſible heavens.—How prodigiouſly wonderful! that an image of the hugeſt mountains, and a tranſcript of the moſt *diverſified* landſcapes, ſhall enter the ſmall circlet of the pupil!—How ſurpriſingly artful! that the rays of light, like an inimitable pencil, ſhould paint on the optic nerves; paint in an inſtant of time; paint in their *trueſt* colours, and *exacteſt* lineaments, every ſpecies of external objects!

The eye is ſo tender, that a ſlight accident, ſcarce perceivable by ſome other parts of the body, would be very injurious to its delicate frame. It is guarded therefore with remarkable circumſpection, and the moſt ſolicitous care; with a care evidently proportioned to its nice texture, and extenſive uſefulneſs. It is *intrenched* deep in the head; and *barricaded*, on every ſide, with a ſtrong fortification of bones.—As the incurſion of the ſmalleſt fly would incommode the poliſhed ſurface, it is farther defended by two ſubſtantial *curtains*, hung on a moſt ſlender cartilaginous rod: which ſecure it, not barely from blows, and from any hurtful attrition, but alſo from every troubleſome annoyance. In ſleep, when there is no occaſion to exerciſe the ſenſe, but an abſolute neceſſity to protect the organ, theſe curtains *ſpontaneouſly* cloſe, and never fail to lie ſhut. At any time, they will *fly* together with a motion quick as the alarm of fear, I had almoſt ſaid, quicker than thought itſelf. At all times they are lined with an extremely fine ſponge *, wet with its own *native dews;* which lubricate the eyeball; oil, as it were, its wheels; and fit it for a courſe of unwearied activity.—At the end of this ſkinny mantelet

* The *glandula lachrymalis* and its ducts; opening on the inner part of the eyelid, and ſecreting the fluid, which *Theron* calls its oil; becauſe it irrigates the eyeball, and facilitates its motion.

telet (if I may uſe the military ſtyle) is planted a range of briſtly *paliſadoes* * : which keep out the leaſt mote ; ward off even the ſtraggling atom ; and moderate the otherwiſe too potent impreſſions of the ſun-beams †.

The *brows* are a kind of natural *pent-houſe*, thatched and arched with curious wreaths of hair. The thatch is intended to divert the ſweat from trickling into the eyes, and offending them with its brine. The *arches* are ſo finely coloured, and ſo elegantly turned, that they ſet off the whiteneſs of the forehead, and beſtow additional grace on the whole countenance.—Becauſe, in our waking hours, there is almoſt an inceſſant call for thoſe little orbs, they run upon the fineſt *caſters ;* rolling upwards or downwards, to the right hand or to the left, with the utmoſt ſpeed, and with equal eaſe. Which circumſtance, added to the flexibility of the neck, renders our *two* eyes as uſeful, as if the whole body, like the living creatures in St *John's* viſion, was *full of eyes before and behind* ‡.

The

* The hairs, which ariſe upon the extremities of the eye-laſh, grow only to a certain convenient length, and never ſtand in need of cutting.—They are not flaccid and pendulous, like thoſe of the head; but *ſtiff* and *prominent*, like briſtles. The firſt ſort would be troubleſome, the laſt is beneficial.—Add to this, that their points ſtand out of the way; thoſe of the upper eyelid being bent upwards, and thoſe of the lower downwards.—So nice is nature, even in ſuch ſmall matters !

† The inceſſant, the more than fatherly care, which the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY takes of his people, is repreſented in ſcripture by this extraordinary proviſion made for the ſecurity of the eye: which is one of the *fineſt* images, that fancy can form; and one of the moſt *conſolatory* truths, that faith can believe. *He kept him as the apple of his eye*, Deut. xxxii. 10.—*He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye*, Zech. ii. 8.—The reader will eaſily ſee, that the compariſon, every way beautiful, is carried to the *higheſt* pitch of energy and beauty, by the ſacred writers. Not barely the eye, but the *apple* or *pupil* of the eye; the tendereſt part even of the moſt tender member.

‡ Rev. iv. 6.

The *ear* consists of an outward porch and inner rooms, with tools of the most admirable contrivance and finished workmanship. The contrivance and the workmanship incomparably nicer than the designs of *Palladio*, or the architecture of *Solomon*'s temple; though the former were drawn from the magnificent monuments of *Rome*, though the latter was built in the taste of *heaven*. Yea, so consummately nice is the structure of this organ, that GOD, the only wise GOD, is not ashamed to be called its artificer. *He that planted the ear* *; is to be found among the titles of the exalted JEHOVAH.—In one very remarkable peculiarity, this minute fabric resembles that sacred edifice, the porch being loftier † than any other part of the building.

The *porch* I call that semicircular lodge, which stands somewhat prominent from the head; and is—not *soft* and *sinking* as flesh, lest it should absorb the sound, rather than promote the repercussion; not *hard* and *stubborn* as bone, lest it should occasion painful inconveniences, when we repose ourselves on either side;—but of a *cartilaginous* substance, covered with a tight expansion of skin, and wrought into irregular bends and hollows: which, like circling hills, or surrounding rocky shores ‡, collect the wandering undulations of the air; and transmit them, with a vigorous impulse, to the finely-stretched membrane of the tympanum ‖.—The *avenue*, or narrow entry, is secured from the

* Psal. xciv. 9.

† Compare 1 *Kings* vi. 2. with 2 *Chron.* iii. 4.

‡ Alluding to those expressive lines, where *echo* seems to live in the sound, as well as in the sense;

——— *Vocemque inclusa volutant*
Littora, pulsati colles clamore resultant. VIRG.

‖ So called, because it resembles a *drum*, both in figure and use. Being a fine skin, expanded upon a circle of bones, and over a polished reverberating cavity.—It is affected by the vi-

the insinuating attempts of little insects, by a *morass* (shall I say ?) of bitter and viscous matter ; disgustful to their taste, and embarrassing to their feet.—The *hammer* and the *anvil ;* the *stirrup* and the *drum ;* the winding labyrinths *, and the sounding galleries ; these, and other pieces of mechanism, all instrumental to the power of hearing, are beyond description curious.

Amazingly-nice must be the formation, and inconceivably-exact the tension, of the auditory nerves ; since they correspond with the smallest tremors of the atmosphere, and easily distinguish their most subtile variations. With the gentle gales that fan us, or even with the ruder blasts that assault us, these delicate strings are but little affected. Whereas they are perfect *unisons* with those fine, those *significant* agitations of the air, which the acutest touch is unable to discern. These living chords, tuned by an almighty hand, and diffused through the echoing isles, and sonorous cells,—these receive the impressions of sound, and propagate them to the brain. These † give existence

brations of the external air, as the covering of the war-drum is by the impressions of the stick.—It is also furnished with *braces*, which strain or relax it at pleasure ; and accommodate its tension either to loud or languid sounds.

* Of this kind is the auditory tube, intended to *soften* and *qualify* the rushing sound. Lest, if the incursion were direct, it might be too impetuous, and injure the delicate expanse of the tympanum. While this is designed to moderate, the concavities of the inner structure are prepared to *heighten* and *invigorate* the sound, by calling in the auxiliary force of an echo. —Such intentions, so *varying*, nay so *opposite*, concur to form this admirable organ !

† Elegantly styled, *the daughters of music*. For this phrase may refer, as well to the organs which *distinguish*, as to those which *form*, the harmonious accents, *Eccl.* xii. 4.—Methinks, I am always desirous to add any apposite expression, or parallel passage from the BIBLE. As I find, writers of taste and politeness are studious to embellish their works, with quotations from

ence to the charms of muſic, and reciprocate the rational entertainments of diſcourſe. Theſe treat my *Aſpaſio* with the melody of the woodland choirs, and afford *me* the ſuperior pleaſure of my friend's converſation.

The eye perceives only the objects that are *before* it; whereas the ear warns us of tranſactions, that paſs above us, behind us, all around us.—The eye is uſeleſs, amidſt the gloom of night, and cannot carry its obſervation through the bolted door, or the cloſed window-ſhutter. But the ear admits her intelligence, thro' the *darkeſt* medium, and the *minuteſt* cranny.—The eye is upon duty, only in our waking hours; but the ear is always expanded, and always acceſſible *; a courier which never tires; a centry ever in his box.—To ſecure a reſource, in caſe any misfortune ſhould diſable *one* of the hearing or ſeeing organs, our all-gracious MAKER has given us *duplicates* of each.

As there are tremulous concuſſions impreſſed upon the air, diſcernable only by the inſtruments of hearing; there are alſo *odoriferous* particles, wafted by the ſame aereal vehicle, which are perceivable only by the *ſmell*.—The noſtrils are wide at the bottom, that a large quantity of effluvia may enter; narrow at the top, that, when entered, they may cloſe their ranks, and act with greater vigour.—Fine, beyond all imagination, are the ſteams which exhale from fetid or fragrant bodies. The very beſt microſcopes, which diſcover *thouſands* and *thouſands* of animalcules in a drop of putrefied water, cannot bring

one

from the *claſſics*. And I perſuade myſelf, the reader will allow me to gratify this favourite inclination: becauſe every portion of that ineſtimable book, however minute, is like the filings of gold, or the ſparks of a diamond; is ſure, when properly applied, to add *worth*, and impart *beauty*.

* *Auditus autem ſemper patet. Ejus enim ſenſus etiam dormientes egemus. A quo, cum ſonus eſt acceptus, eitam e ſomno excutimur.* De nat. Deor.

one individual, among all these evanescent legions, to our sight. They sail, in numberless squadrons, close to our eyes, close by our ears; yet are so amazingly attenuated, that they elude the search of both. Nevertheless, so judiciously * are the *olfactory* nets laid, and so artfully their meshes sized, that they catch these vanishing fugitives. They catch the roaming perfumes, which fly off from the opening honeysuckle; and take in the stationed sweets, which hover round the expanded rose. They imbibe all the balmy fragrance of spring, all the aromatic exhalations of autumn, and enable us to banquet even on the *invisible* dainties of nature.

Furnished with these several organs,

——————*Not a* breeze
Flies o'er the meadow, not a cloud *imbibes*
The

* The *keenness* and *sagacity* of this sense, furnished the evangelical prophet with a beautiful metaphor, to display the *accuracy* of the MESSIAH's judgment in spiritual things, *Is.* xi. 3. ריח implies his faculty or sense of *smelling;* which expression is accommodated to our language, and properly enough translated, *shall make him of quick understanding.* q. d. "He "shall judge, not according to external appearance, but ac- "cording to the state of the inner man. Unfeigned self-abase- "ment, affiance in a REDEEMER's righteousness, and "faith purifying the heart; these endowments, though not "observed, or, if observed, not valued by the world; *these* "shall be the test of his approbation, and the objects of his "esteem. These constitute, what is called in the next words, "*the fear of the* LORD.

"In determining the reality of these qualities, he shall be "*unerringly* exact, and *infallibly* true. Let Hypocrisy put on "every mask, and practise all her wiles, they shall avail no- "thing before the ROOT and OFFSPRING of *David.* (ver. "1.) As those extremely subtile effluvia, which escape the "inquisition of every other sense, are easily and perfectly dis- "tinguished by the *smell;* so those recesses of the breast, and "those secrets of the heart, which lie too deep for all human "discernment; even they are naked and open, are obvious "and palpable, to *his* divinely sagacious understanding."

The ſetting ſun's effulgence, not a ſtrain
From all the tenants of the warbling ſhade
Aſcends, but whence our ſenſes can partake
Freſh pleaſure ‡.

Another capacity for frequent pleaſure, our bountiful CREATOR has beſtowed, in granting us the powers of *taſte*. By means of which, the food that ſupports our body, feaſts our palate; firſt, treats us with a pleaſing regale; then, diſtributes its beneficial recruits.—The razor, whetted with oil, becomes more exquiſitely keen. The *ſaliva*, flowing upon the tongue, and moiſtening its nerves, quickens them into the livelieſt acts of ſenſation.—This ſenſe is circumſtanced, in a manner peculiarly benign and wiſe; ſo as to be a ſtanding, though ſilent plea for *temperance*. Without recurring to the vengeance of GOD, or the terrors of eternal judgment, it is a powerful diſſuaſive from irregular and exceſſive indulgencies. Becauſe the exerciſe of ſobriety ſets the fineſt edge on its faculties; and adds the moſt *poignant* reliſh to its enjoyments. Whereas riot and voluptuouſneſs *pall* the appetite; blunt its ſenſibility; and render the gratifications extremely languid, if not perfectly inſipid.—The ſight, the ſmell, the taſte are, not only ſo many ſeparate ſources of delight, but a joint ſecurity to our health. They are the *vigilant* and *accurate* inſpectors, which examine our food, and inquire into its properties, whether it be pleaſant or diſagreeable, wholeſome or noxious. For the diſcharge of this office, they are excellently qualified, and moſt commodiouſly ſituate. So that nothing can gain admiſſion thro' the mouth, till it has undergone the ſcrutiny, and obtained the paſſport of them all.

To all theſe, as a moſt neceſſary and advantageous ſupplement, is added the ſenſe of *feeling*: which renders

‡ See that very elegant poem, *The pleaſures of imagination*, book III.

ders the whole aſſemblage complete.—While other ſenſes have a particular place of reſidence, this is diffuſed throughout *the whole* body. In the palms of the hands, on the tips of the fingers, and indeed thro' all the extreme parts of the fleſh, it is moſt quick and lively; as the advanced guards, or ſcouts upon the frontiers, are or ought to be peculiarly attentive and wakeful.—Scouts did I ſay? The whole army of *Xerxes*, drawn out in battle-array, with his *millions* of ſupernumerary attendants *, were but like a few *gleaners* ſtraggling in the field, if compared, either in number or order, with thoſe nervous detachments, which pervade the texture of the ſkin, and miniſter to the act of feeling.—How happily is this ſenſe tempered between the two extremes! Neither ſo *acute*, as the membranes of the eye; nor ſo *obtuſe*, as the callus of the heel. The former would expoſe us to continual pain; render our cloaths galling, and the very down oppreſſive. The latter would quite benumb the body, and almoſt annihilate the touch.—Nor this alone, but *all* the ſenſes are moſt exactly adapted to their reſpective offices, and to the exigencies of our preſent ſtate. Were they *ſtrained* to a much higher tone, they would be avenues of anguiſh. Were they *relaxed* into greater inſenſibility, they would be ſo many uſeleſs incumbrances.

Aſp. How admirable and gracious is this proviſion, which the bleſſed GOD has made, to accommodate us with delightful ſenſations, and inſtructive ideas!—The taſte, the touch, and the ſmell, are ſomewhat *ſtraitened* in the extent of their operations. The ear carries on a correſpondence with a *larger* circle of objects. But the ſight moſt amply ſupplies whatever is wanting in all the other ſenſes. The ſight ſpreads itſelf

* The ſoldiers and attendants of *Xerxes*, amounted to five millions two hundred and eighty thouſand. Another army, ſo large and numerous, occurs not in all the records of hiſtory. *Vid.* HEROD. lib. VII.

ſelf to an *infinite* multitude of bodies, and brings within our notice ſome of the *remoteſt* parts of the univerſe.—The taſte, the touch, the ſmell, perceive nothing but what is brought to their very doors. Whereas the eye extends its obſervation, as far as the orbit of *Saturn;* nay glances, and in an inſtant of time, to the inconceivable diſtance of the ſtars. The compaſs of the earth, and the immenſity of the ſkies, are its unlimited range.

From this remarkable variety, with regard to the *ſphere* and *activity* of the ſenſes, St *Paul* forms one of the fineſt, boldeſt, and moſt important compariſons in the world. By this he illuſtrates the difference between the wiſdom which is derived from the word of divine revelation, and the wiſdom which is acquired by dint of human application.—In his oration to the *Athenians*, ſpeaking of their moſt celebrated ſages, he ſays, *If ſo be, they might* feel after, *and find HIM* *. In his epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, ſpeaking of the man *Moſes*, our author obſerves, that *he endured as* ſeeing *him who is inviſible* †. Writing to his *Corinthian* converts, he adds, as a farther heightening of the contraſt, *We all* beholding *with open face the glory of the LORD* ‡.—The knowledge of the *philoſopher*, is like that obſcure and ſcanty information, which is to be obtained by groping with the hand in a dark night. The knowledge of the *Chriſtian*, is like that copious influx of clear and enlarged ideas, which we receive by the mediation of the eye, amidſt the ſhining of a bright day.

Tully, we find, has, in the book before us, hit upon ſome of the moſt general and obvious uſes, to which the ſeveral parts of the human body are adapted. Yet how *ſuperficial* and *deficient* appears his penetration, when we take in the much deeper diſcoveries, and the

* *Acts* xvii. 27. Ει αρα γε ψηλαφησειαν αυτον.
† Heb. xi. 27. ‡ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

the much higher improvements of our modern anatomy! Thus, and abundantly more defective, is his knowledge of moral duties and divine doctrines; when compared with what is taught us in the *plain* sermon on the mount, and the unstudied epistles of the *Jewish* tent-maker.

Therefore, tho' I would bless the beneficent GOD, for the ministration of all the senses, and particularly for the noble organs of vision; I would be more especially thankful for that light of the world, *CHRIST JESUS* and his glorious gospel; as well as for that *spiritual eye* *, by which the one is understood, and the other seen,—a *lively faith*. I would also long for that place of beatific enjoyment, where our views of the adorable GODHEAD, and our acquaintance with the sublimest truths, will as much transcend all our present apprehensions, as the most enlightened *saint* exceeds the benighted *Gentile*.

Ther. The crowning gift,—that which improves the satisfaction, and augments the beneficial effects, accruing from all the senses, is *speech*.—Speech makes me a gainer from the eyes and ears of other people; from the ideas they conceive, and the observations they make. And what an admirable instrument, for articulating the voice, and modifying it into speech, is the *tongue!*—The tongue has neither bone nor joint; yet fashions itself, with the utmost volubility, into every shape and every posture, which can express sentiment, or constitute harmony. This little collection of muscular fibres, under the conducting skill of the CREATOR, is the artificer of our words †. By this we communicate

* *Luke* xxiv. 45, *Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.* Διηνοιξεν is the word used in this place, and the word used by the evangelical historian, when he relates that *supernatural* act, which gave sight to the blind.

† I am sensible, that the *glottis* has a considerable share, in modulating

communicate the *secrets* of the breast, and make our very *thoughts* audible. By this we instruct the ignorant, and comfort the distressed; we glorify GOD, and edify each other *; the academic explains the abstrusest sciences, and the ecclesiastic preaches the everlasting gospel.—This is likewise the efficient of *music*. It is soft as the lute, or shrill as the trumpet; it can warble as the lyre, or resound like the organ. Connecting the sacred anthem with its tuneful strains, we sooth the cares, and beguile the toils of life; we imitate the angelic choirs, and anticipate, in some degree, their celestial joys.—As the tongue requires full scope, and an easy play, it is lodged in an ample cavity; and surrounded with reservoirs of spittle, always ready to distil the lubricating dews. It moves under a concave roof, which serves as a *sounding-board* to the voice; giving it much the same additional vigour and grace, as the shell of a violin adds to the language of the strings.

Wise,—wonderfully wise, and eminently gracious, is the regulation both of *spontaneous* and *involuntary* motion. Was this regulation reversed, what deplorable inconveniencies would take place; nay, what

modulating the sound, and forming the voice. But, as the nature and office of this most *curious aperture*, are very little known by the generality of people; we chuse to follow the popular opinion, so neatly described by the poet,

———————*Dædala lingua,*
Lingua figuratrix verborum, opisexque loquelæ.
Anti-Lucret.

* The articulating tongue is called *our glory*, Psal. lvii. 8. And such indeed it is, when devoted to *these* purposes. It is then a distinction, not only of man from the brutal herd, but of the righteous from the congregation of the ungodly. It is then like *choice silver*, or as *a tree of life*.

Who would not bless for this the gift of speech,
And in the tongue's beneficence be rich?

unavoidable ruin must ensue! *Deplorable inconveniencies;* if the discharges of the bowels, or evacuations of the bladder, were quite independent on our leave. *Unavoidable ruin;* if the action of the heart required the co-operation of our thoughts, or the business of respiration waited for the concurrence of our will.

The will, in some cases, has not so much as a single vote. In others she *determines* and *commands*, like an absolute sovereign; nor is there a monarch upon earth so punctually obeyed, as this queen of the human system. If she but intimate her pleasure, the spirits run, they fly, to execute her orders; to stretch the arm, or close the hand; to furrow the brow with frowns, or dimple the cheek with smiles.—How *easily*, as well as *punctually*, are these orders carried into execution! To turn the screw, or work the lever, is laborious and wearisome. But we move the vertebræ, with all their appendent chambers; we advance the leg, with the whole incumbent body; we rise from our seat; we spring from the ground; and though much force is exerted, tho' a very considerable weight is raised, we meet with no difficulty, we complain of no fatigue.

That all this should be effected, without any toil, and by a *bare act* of the will, is very surprising. But that these motions should be made, renewed, continued, even while we remain *entirely* ignorant of the *manner* in which they are performed, is beyond measure astonishing.—Who can play so much as a *single* tune upon the spinnet, without learning the difference of the keys, or studying the rudiments of music? Impossible! Yet the mind of man touches *every* spring of the human machine, with the most masterly skill; though she knows nothing at all concerning the nature of her implements, or the process of her operations.—We walk, we run, we leap; we throw ourselves into a variety of postures, and perform a multitude of motions; yet are utterly unable to say,

which

which nerve ſhould be active; which muſcle ſhould ſwell; or which tendon approximate.

Put a *German* flute into the hand even of a ſenſible perſon: without a maſter to inſtruct him, he is at a loſs to make the inſtrument ſpeak; much leſs is he able to ſink and ſoften the ſound, to exalt and extend it juſt as he pleaſes.—Yet we are ſelf-taught in the method of *forming*, *regulating*, and *varying* the voice. Naturally, and with unpremeditated fluency, we give it the languiſhing cadence of ſorrow, or the ſprightly airs of joy; the low faltering accents of fear, or the elevated tone and rapid ſallies of anger.

The eye of a ruſtic, who has no notion of optics, or any of its laws, ſhall *lengthen* and *ſhorten* its axis, *dilate* and *contract* its pupil, without the leaſt heſitation, and with the utmoſt propriety; adapting itſelf, even with mathematical exactneſs, to the particular diſtance of objects, and the different degrees of light. By which means, it performs ſome of the moſt curious experiments in the improved *Newtonian* philoſophy, without the leaſt knowledge of the ſcience, or ſo much as any conſciouſneſs of its own dexterity.

I can never ſufficiently admire this multiplicity of animated organs; their finiſhed form, and their faultleſs order. Yet I muſt confeſs myſelf ſtruck with greater admiration at the power, the *truly-myſterious* power and ſway, which the ſoul exerciſes over them. Ten thouſand reins are put into her hand; ſhe is not acquainted with their office, their uſe, or their name; ſhe has not learned ſo much as to diſtinguiſh one from another: nevertheleſs ſhe manages all, conducts all, without the leaſt perplexity or the leaſt irregularity; rather with a promptitude, a conſiſtency, and a ſpeed, which nothing elſe can equal!

Upon the whole—great reaſon had *Euripides* to call the human body,

Σοφὴν τεκτόνος χαλκὸν ποικίλμα.

I believe, the preceding obſervations will juſtify us, if we

we give a fuller meaning to the poet, and tranſlate his words—*the infinitely-varied, and inimitably-fine workmanſhip of a great, ſupreme, unerring ARTIST.* Or, as *Virgil* ſpeaks, with a pertinency and a ſpirit, which epitomizes all I have ſaid, and expreſſes all I would ſay; this bodily ſtructure is indeed—*non enarrabile textum* *.

Aſp. Wonderfully, I perceive, *and fearfully are we made*†!—Made of ſuch complicated parts: each ſo correctly faſhioned, and all ſo exactly arranged‡; every one executing ſuch curious functions, and many of them operating in ſo myſterious a manner; as may juſtly render us *a wonder to ourſelves*.—Since health depends upon ſuch a numerous aſſemblage of moving organs: ſince a ſingle ſecretion ſtopped, may deſtroy the ſalutary temperature of the fluids; or a ſingle wheel clogged, may put an end to the vital motion of the ſolids: with what holy *fear ſhould we paſs the time of our ſojourning here below*‖! truſting, for continual preſervation, not merely on our own care, but on that omnipotent hand, which formed the admirable machine: that the ſame hand which formed it, may ſuperintend its agency, and ſupport its being†.

When we conſider the extenſive contrivance, and delicate

* That is, a ſtructure, not barely correct, or highly finiſhed, but (as *Theron* has elſewhere expreſſed it) *beyond deſcription curious.*

† Pſal. cxxxix. 14.

‡ St *Paul*'s language on the ſubject is exceedingly beautiful and expreſſive, Συναρμολογούμενον & συμβιβαζόμενον. Eph. iv. 16. The ſeveral parts moſt nicely *adapted* to each other, and moſt perfectly *harmonizing* with the whole. All *aſſociated* with that propriety, and *connected* with that firmneſs which are the very foundation of ſymmetry, vigour, and agility.

‖ 1 Pet. i. 17.

† Agreeably to that philoſophical maxim, *Creatio et conſervatio eadem eſt actio;* and to thoſe ſcriptural acknowledgments, It is GOD *who holdeth our ſoul in life; he is the length of our days; his viſitation prolongeth our ſpirit.*

delicate mechaniſm,—what plans of geometry have been laid: what operations of chemiſtry are performed; in a word, what miracles of art and elegance are executed, in order to furniſh us with the neceſſary recruits, and the ſeveral delights of life;—is there not abundant reaſon to cry out, with the ſame inſpired writer, "*How dear are thy counſels unto me, O GOD!* "Thy counſels of creating wiſdom! thou haſt not "been ſparing, but even laviſh of thy indulgent de- "ſigns. Thou haſt omitted no expedient, which "might eſtabliſh my eaſe; enlarge my comforts; "and promote, yea complete my bodily happineſs!" And is not this a moſt endearing obligation *to glorify the bleſſed GOD, with our bodies, as well as with our ſpirits* *?

Ther. Our ſpirits! Ay; what is this manſion of fleſh, though ſo exquiſitely wrought, compared with the noble and immortal inhabitant, which reſides within?

——————*That intellectual being;*
Thoſe thoughts, which wander through eternity †!

This conſideration inclines me to think, that, if the *caſket* be ſo highly poliſhed, the *jewel* cannot be ſo exceſſively coarſe, as my *Aſpaſio*'s doctrine of original corruption ſuppoſes.

Aſp. I perceive your aim, *Theron;* but muſt beg leave, at preſent, to decline all overtures for a diſpute. If my arguments have failed, your deſcription has anſwered its end.—I cannot ſuffer my thoughts to be diverted from a ſubject, which is ſo very engaging, yet ſo rarely diſcuſſed. I have ſuch a ſtrong deſire to recollect and retain what has been obſerved, that even *your* converſation will, at this juncture, loſe its reliſh. Here therefore I put a period to our diſcourſe, and muſt break away from your company, in order to ruminate

* 1 Cor. vi. 20. † MILTON.

minate and digeſt my notions, in ſome ſequeſtered lonely walk. Unleſs you will permit me, before I retire, to make one remark.—And let it not ſtartle my friend, if I venture to ſay, That, amidſt all his curious obſervations, he has forgot the principal circumſtance of *honour* and *excellence*, which dignifies the human body.

Ther. I have omitted many fine and admirable properties, I confeſs. But ſure I have not forgot the *principal* and moſt diſtinguiſhing.

Aſp. You need not be diſpleaſed with yourſelf. It argues no defect in your diſſertation. The circumſtance I have in my view, could never be diſcovered, by following the diſſecting knife. It is learned, not from *Cheſelden*'s draughts, or the tables of *Albinus*; but from the word of revelation. What I mean, is this:—The human body was exalted to a moſt intimate and *perſonal union* with the eternal SON of GOD. He who decorated the heaven with ſtars, and crowned the ſtars with luſtre; *He vouchſafed to be made fleſh* *, *and was found in faſhion as a man* †.—Nay, this is, even *now*, the apparel of that divine and adorable PERSON. He is clothed with our nature; he wears our very limbs; and appears in the dreſs of humanity, even at the right hand of GOD, and at the head of all the heavenly hoſts.

What think you of another privilege, mentioned by the apoſtle? *Your bodies are the temple of the HOLY GHOST* ‡. Not your ſouls only, but your very bodies are the ſhrine, in which *the high and holy ONE that inhabiteth eternity*, condeſcends to dwell. HE, who ſitteth between the cherubim, and walketh in the circuit of the ſkies, is pleaſed to ſanctify theſe earthly tenements, for his own habitation. And is not this a *much grander* embelliſhment, than all their matchleſs contrivance and maſterly workmanſhip? Juſt as the

rod

* John i. 14. † Phil. ii. 8. ‡ 1 Cor. vi. 19.

rod which budded, and the *manna* which was miraculously preserved; the sacred *oracle* of *Urim* and *Thummim*, with the *cloud* of glory covering the mercy-seat; were a much higher distinction to *Solomon's* temple, than the most heightened beauties of architecture.

Nor must I omit the dignity,—the transcendent and amazing dignity,—which is reserved for these systems of flesh, at the *resurrection* of the just. They will then be refined and improved into the most perfect state, and the most beauteous form; surpassing whatever is resplendent and amiable in the most ornamental appearances of material nature. They will be purer than the unspotted firmament; brighter than the lustre of the stars; and, which exceeds all parallel, which comprehends all perfection, they will *be made like unto CHRIST's glorious body* *; like that incomparably-glorious body, which the blessed *JESUS* wears, in his celestial kingdom, and on his triumphant throne.

When we add all these *magnificent prerogatives*, which are revealed in scripture, to all those *inimitable niceties*, which are displayed by anatomists, what thankfulness, what admiration, can equal such a profusion of favours?

When all thy mercies, O my GOD,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise!

* Phil. iii. 21.

DIALOGUE XIII.

THE morning had been wet. At noon the rain ceased. But the heavens still continued gloomy.

—Towards evening, a gentle eaſtern gale ſprung up; which diſſipated the dead calm, and cleared the face of the ſky.—The ſun, which had been muffled in clouds, dropped the veil. Diſengaged from the duſky ſhroud, he ſhone forth with *peculiar ſplendor*. His beams, endeared by their late ſuſpenſion, were doubly welcome, and produced unuſual gaiety.

At this juncture, *Theron* and *Aſpaſio* walked abroad. They walked alternately on the terraces; one of which was oppoſite to the country, the other contiguous to the parterre.—Where the gales, impregnated with the *freſheſt* exhalations of nature, breathed the ſmell of meads, and heaths, and groves.—Or elſe ſhaking the cluſters of roſes, and ſweeping the beds of fragrance, they flung *balm* and *odours* thro' the air.

At a diſtance, were heard the bleatings of the flock, mingled with the lowings of the milky mothers. While more melodious muſic warbled from the neighbouring boughs, and ſpoke aloud the joy of their feathered inhabitants;—and not only ſpoke their joy, but ſpread an *additional* charm over all the landſcape. For, amidſt ſuch ſtrains of native harmony, the breathing perfumes ſmell more ſweet, the ſtreaming rills ſhine more clear, and the univerſal proſpect looks more gay.

Then was experienced, what *Milton* ſo delicately deſcribes;

> *If chance the radiant ſun with farewell ſweet*
> *Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,*
> *The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds*
> *Atteſt their joy, that hill and valley rings.*

With wonder and delight our friends obſerved, both the exquiſite beauty, and the immenſe magnificence of things.—They were ſtruck with the moſt profound veneration of that almighty MAJESTY, who hung the ſun in vaults of azure, and clothed his orb with robes

robes of luſtre: whoſe *right hand ſpanneth the heavens* *, *and ſtretcheth them out as a tent*, for innumerable creatures, worlds, ſyſtems *to dwell in* †.—Charmed they were at the conſideration of the CREATOR's boundleſs beneficence: who lights up the light of his countenance, and joy is ſhed; who opens his munificent hand, and plenty is poured, throughout all the regions of the univerſe. Inſomuch, that even inanimate beings ſeem to ſmile under a ſenſe of the bleſſings: and tho' they find not a tongue to praiſe, yet ſpeak their acclamations by their *gladdened* looks.

Ther. How very different, *Aſpaſio*, is this delightful appearance of things, from your ill-favoured doctrine of original guilt, and original depravity? Your doctrine is a contradiction to the language of nature. Nature ſays, through all her works, "That GOD is "*good*, and men are made to be *happy*." Whereas your opinion would turn the whole world into a vaſt hoſpital, and make every individual perſon a *leper* or a *Lazarus*.

Aſp. I join with my *Theron*, and with univerſal nature, in bearing witneſs to the goodneſs of our GOD. And nothing, I am perſuaded, diſplays it more, nothing manifeſts it ſo much, as the doctrine of our *fall* in *Adam*, connected with our *recovery* in *CHRIST*.—Only in one particular I am obliged to diſſent. It is not my opinion that *would make*, but the ſin of our forefather which *has made*, the whole world an infirmary, and every individual perſon a leper.

Ther. At this rate, you would croud into that *ſingle* act of diſobedience, evils more numerous, and more fatal, than the plagues which were lodged in *Pandora*'s box, or the troops which were ſtowed in the *Trojan* horſe.

*If. xlviii. 13. † If. xl. 22.

Asp. Far more numerous, and infinitely more pernicious.—The fable of *Pandora*'s box seems to have been a shred of the doctrine, picked up by the Heathen wits, and fashioned according to their sportive fancy. This would, if there was any occasion for such weak assistance, bring in the *Pagan* theology, as a subsidiary evidence to our cause.—The *Trojan* horse poured ruin upon a single city; but the primitive transgression entailed misery upon all generations.

Ther. You have advanced this heavy charge pretty strenuously, I must confess; but without descending to facts, or appealing to experience. All the invectives are *general* and *declamatory*, none pointing and particular.

Asp. It is easy, my dear friend, too easy to draw up a particular bill of indictment; and not only to *specify* the facts, but to *demonstrate* the charge. Experience, sad experience will furnish us with a cloud of witnesses, and prove my remonstrances to be more than invectives.

Were we to dissect human nature, as, in our last conference, you treated the animal system, we should find the leprosy of corruption, spreading itself thro' our whole frame. For which reason, it is styled, by an inspired writer, "the old man †."—*Old;* because, in its commencement, it was early as the fall; and in its communication to individuals, is co-eval with their being.—*Man;* because it has tainted the body, infected the soul, and disordered the whole person.

St *Paul*, describing a profligate conversation, speaks in this remarkable manner; *fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind* ‡. By the desires of the flesh, he means those irregular inclinations, which correspond with the *animal* part of our constitution. By the desires of the mind, he denotes those evil propensities, which are more immediately seated in the *intellectual* faculties.

* Rom. vi. 6. ‡ Eph. ii. 3.

faculties. And by both, he very ſtrongly expreſſes the *total* depravation of our nature.

Then. What you call evil propenſities, I am apt to think, are not really ſinful, but appointed for the *trial* of our virtue.—Nay, ſince they are confeſſedly *natural*, they cannot be in themſelves evil: becauſe, upon this ſuppoſition, GOD, who is the author of our nature, would be the author alſo of our ſin.

Aſp. Then you imagine, that propenſities to evil are void of guilt. This is the *Popiſh* notion, but neither the *Moſaic* nor the *Apoſtolic* doctrine.—In the law of *Moſes* it is written, *Thou ſhalt not covet* *. The divine LEGISLATOR prohibits, not only the iniquitous practice, but the evil deſire.—The apoſtle gives it in charge to the *Coloſſians*, *Mortify your members, which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, and*, which is the ſource of all, *evil concupiſcence* †. Now, can *that* be free from guilt, which we are commanded to mortify? which, if not mortified, denominates us children of diſobedience, and ſubjects us to the wrath ‡ of GOD?

Though theſe propenſities are confeſſedly natural, they may be evil notwithſtanding. The ſacred writers oppoſe what is natural, to what is ſpiritual. Inſtead of commending it, as innocent; they condemn it, as *fooliſh* ‖, *baſe* †, and *criminal* ††.—Neither does this make the AUTHOR of our nature, the author of our ſin. But it proves, that our nature has ſuſtained a deplorable loſs; that it is quite different from its original ſtate; that what is ſpoken of the *Iſraelitiſh* people, is applicable to the *human* race; *I planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right ſeed; how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a ſtrange vine* ††?

However, let us obſerve your propoſal; dwell no longer

* Exod. xx. 17. † Col. iii. 5. ‡ Col. iii. 6.
‖ 1 Cor. ii. 14. † 2 Pet. ii. 12. † Eph. ii. 3.
†† Jer. ii. 21.

longer on general hints, but descend to a particular examination. As our examination will chiefly respect the soul, let me inquire, what are her principal faculties?

Ther. The *understanding*, the *will*, and the *affections*. These are the most distinguishing powers, which that queen of the human œconomy retains in her service.—These, like the several distributions of some ample river, run through the whole man; to quicken, fertilize, and enrich all his conversation.—But you represent them bitter, as the waters of *Marah;* unwholesome, as the streams of *Jericho;* noxious, as the pottage prepared for the sons of the prophets.

Asp. Nor is this a misrepresentation. For such they really are, till divine grace, like *Moses*'s wood*, like *Elisha*'s salt †, or the meal ‡ cast in by that holy man of GOD, *sweeten* them, *heal* them, and render their operations *salutary.*

The understanding claims our first regard.—This, however qualified to serve the purposes of civil life, is unable to discover the truths, in which *wisdom* consists; or to form the tempers, from which *happiness* flows.

Let us take our specimen, not from the uncultivated savages of *Afric*, but from the politest nation in *Europe.*—The *Grecians* piqued themselves on their intellectual accomplishments. They termed all the rest of mankind *barbarians.* Yet even these sons of science, *professing themselves wise, were*, in fact, egregious *fools* ||.—Not to enumerate the shocking immoralities, which the poets ascribed to their deities; not to insist upon the gross idolatries, which the common people practised in their worship: even their *philosophers*, the most improved and penetrating geniuses, were unacquainted with the very *first principle* † of true

* Exod. xv. 25. † 2 Kings ii. 21, 22.
‡ 2 Kings iv. 41. || Rom. i. 22.

† *The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, The* LORD *our* GOD *is* ONE LORD; *and thou shalt love the* LORD,

true religion. Even they could not pronounce, with an unfaltering tongue *, "That God is ONE."

Ther. With regard to the philosophers, the prejudices of a wrong education might pervert their judgment; or, in compliance with the prevailing mode, they might adopt customs, and assent to notions, which they did not thoroughly approve.

LORD, &c. *Mark* xii. 29. From which it appears, that the *unity* of the GODHEAD is the foundation of all the divine commandments, and of all human worship.

* *Unfaltering*—for though, in *Plato*'s book of laws, we meet with ὁ θεος—τὴν θεὸν—τὸν θεὸν again and again; yet he soon departs from this *sound speech*, and relapses into the language of idolatry.

A learned and ingenious friend would fain have *Socrates* exempted from this charge.—I wish I could gratify his benevolent temper, and spare that amiable philosopher. But, however justly he may express himself on some occasions, at other times he wavers; he evidently revolts; and is most pitiably inconsistent with himself.—Even in his excellent conference with *Aristodemus*, where he argues admirably well for the *existence*, he cannot steadily adhere to the *unity*, of the GODHEAD.—Nay, in his last solemn apology before his judges, he publicly *renounces* the truth; declares that he worshipped those gods, which were acknowledged by his countrymen: worshiped them, and no other; on the same festivals, at the same altars, and in the same *(idolatrous)* manner.—*No other*: these are his words, Ουτε γαρ ἐσθ' ὁντε Διος, ἡ Ηρας, ἡ των συν τουτοις θεων, ὁντε θυων τοις αὐτοις βωμοσιν, ὁυτε ομνυς, ὁυτε ὁνομαζων αλλως θεους ανεκτεφνα. SOCRAT. Memorab. lib. i. c. i. *sect.* 11. 24.

Let none conclude from this or any other passage, that we would consign over all the Heathens to damnation. This is as far from our intention, as it is foreign to the argument. We are only like witnesses, summoned to give in our evidence. From which it appears, that the very best among the *Gentiles* were ignorant of the true GOD; or, if *they knew him* in any degree, *they glorified him not as GOD; but became vain in their imagination*, and vile in their worship.—*Whether* they shall obtain mercy, or *which* of them shall be objects of divine clemency, is left *solely* to the determination of their supreme, unerring, righteous JUDGE.

—*Non nostrum est tantas componere lites.*

Asp.

Asp. A poor compliment this to their integrity! Had I been their advocate, methinks, I would have given up the sagacity of my clients, rather than their fidelity to the cause of GOD and truth.

With reference to the *supreme GOOD*, they were equally at a loss.—There's not one among all the inferior creatures, not even the crawling worm, or the buzzing fly, but perceives what is *beneficial*, and pursues it; discerns what is *pernicious*, and avoids it. Yonder caterpillar, whose nourishment is from one particular species of vegetables, never makes a wrong application to another: never is allured by the fragrance of the auricula, or dazzled by the splendor of the tulip; but constantly distinguishes, and as constantly adheres to the leaf, which affords her the proper food. So *sagacious* are the meanest animals, with relation to their respective happiness! While the most celebrated of the Heathen sages were, on a subject of the very same import, merely *dotards*.—*Varro* reckons up no less than two hundred and eighty-eight different opinions concerning the true good; and not one of them derives it from the true source; I mean a conformity to the ever-blessed GOD, and an enjoyment of his infinite perfections.

If, on these *leading* points, they were so erroneous; no wonder, that they were bewildered in their other researches.

Ther. We are not inquiring into the circumstances of this or that particular nation; but into the state of mankind in general.

Asp. Cast your eye, *Theron*, upon those swallows. They shoot themselves, with surprising rapidity, through the air. I should take them for so many living arrows, were it not for their shifting, winding, wanton motions.—Are not these what you call *birds of passage?*

Ther. These, and some other of the feathered race,

are

are our conſtant viſitants in ſummer; but leave us, at the approach of winter. As ſoon as the weather becomes cold, they aſſemble themſelves in a body, and concert meaſures for their departure. *Who* convenes the aſſembly,—*what* debates ariſe,—or *how* they communicate the reſolution taken,—I do not preſume to ſay. This is certain, that not one of them diſlodges, till the affair is ſettled, and the proclamation has been publiſhed. Not a ſingle loiterer is to be ſeen, when the troops are preparing for their decampment; nor a ſingle ſtraggler to be found, when they have once begun their march.—Having finiſhed their journey thro' the land, their wings become a ſort of ſails*; and they launch, not into, but over the ocean. Without any *compaſs* to regulate their courſe, or any *chart* to make obſervations in their voyage, they arrive ſafely at the deſired ſhore. And what is ſtill more extraordinary, they always find the readieſt way, and the ſhorteſt cut.

Aſp. The ſtork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the ſwallow, obſerve the time of their coming: but my people know not the judgment of their GOD†. The young ones of thoſe birds perceive, how abſolutely neceſſary it is, to forſake the land of their nativity, and travel in queſt of milder climes.—But our offſpring, even when their minds begin to open, *are brutiſh in their knowledge*‡, Born they are, and too long continue, *like the wild aſs's colt*‖: not only quite deſtitute of heavenly wiſdom,

* *Remigio alarum.* VIRG.

† Jer. viii. 7. ‡ Jer. x. 14.

‖ *Job* xi. 12. How keenly is this compariſon pointed!—Like the *aſs*'s, an animal remarkable for its ſtupidity, even to a proverb.—Like the *aſs*'s *colt*, which muſt be ſtill more egregiouſly ſtupid than the dam.—Like the *wild aſs*'s *colt*, which is not only blockiſh, but ſtubborn and refractory; neither poſſeſſes valuable qualities by nature, nor will eaſily receive them by diſcipline.—The image, in the original, is yet more ſtrong-

dom, but ſtupid to apprehend it, and averſe to receive it. *As ſoon as they are born, they go aſtray*, and—

Ther. Go aſtray—To what is this owing, but to the *bad examples* they behold? They catch the wayward habit from the irregular converſation of others.

Aſp. Is not this a confirmation of my point? Why are they *yielding* clay to each bad impreſſion? *caſe-hardened* ſteel to every edifying application?—From imitating unworthy examples, you can hardly withhold them by the tighteſt rein. But if you would affect them with a ſenſe of divine things, or bring them acquainted with GOD their Maker, *line muſt be upon line, line upon line; precept muſt be upon precept, precept upon precept; here a little and there a little* *. —What farther corroborates my ſentiment, is, that all theſe tender toils of erudition are generally unwelcome, are too often unſucceſsful, nay, will always be ineffectual, without the concurrence of almighty grace.

Beſides, *Theron*, if this propenſity to evil be obſervable in *all* children, it ſeems more than probable that the unhappy bias is derived from their parents, rather than

ly touched. The comparative particle *like* is not in the *Hebrew*; *born a wild aſs's colt*; or, as we ſhould ſay in *Engliſh*, *a mere wild*, &c.

* A great critic has laid down the following, rule, to be obſerved in fine writing;

'Tis not enough no harſhneſs gives offence,
The ſound muſt be an echo to the ſenſe.

POPE's *eſſay on criticiſm.*

Never was this delicate maxim more nicely exemplified, than in the the above-cited paſſage of *Iſaiah*, chap. xxviii. 13. Another inſtance of the ſame kind occurs in the ſeventh verſe; where the language ſeems to mimic the *reeling*, *ſtraggling*, *giddy* motions of a drunkard; while it iterates and reiterates the idea; expreſſes the ſame thing, in a different and ſtill different manner; with an apparent, and, in this caſe, a ſignificant *circumrotation* of words.

than catched from their neighbours; and owing, not to the influence of external examples, but to a principle of internal corruption *.—Neglect the education of children, and you are ſure to have their manners evil, their lives unprofitable. Nay, only remit your endeavours, and they loſe what has been gained; they ſtart aſide like a broken bow. And wherefore this? Why do they not, without the rules of diſcipline or leſſons of inſtruction, *ſpontaneouſly* addict themſelves to the exerciſe of every virtue? juſt as the cygnets in yonder canal, ſpontaneouſly take to the element of water, and the act of ſwimming.

That bed in the garden before us, will ſuggeſt the reaſon. It has been digged and dreſſed this very day. It now lies ſmooth and clean. Not a ſingle weed appears on its ſurface. Yet how certainly will it, in a very little time, produce a plenteous growth of thoſe vegetable nuiſances?—Whence can this proceed? No hand will ſow them. No wiſh will invite them. But the *ſeeds*, tho' unperceived by any eye, are *already* there. Diſſeminated by the winds, they have mixed themſelves with the mold, and are ſunk into the ſoil.—So, juſt ſo it is with our children. The ſeeds of iniquity are *within* † them; and unleſs proper dili-

 gence

* St *Paul* confeſſes, that he and his fellow-ſaints were, in their unconverted ſtate, depraved: and this, not διὰ τὸν ἔθος, by *cuſtom*, or *habit*, but φύσει, by *nature*. Eph. ii. 3.

† Whoever chuſes to examine the ſeeds, the poiſonous ſeeds, which are lodged in this *nurſery* of all evil, may ſee a ſample of them in our LORD's deſcription, *Mark* vii. 20, 21, 22, 23.; where he characterizes the heart, not barely of the hypocritical Phariſee, or the abandoned publican, but of mankind in general.—After ſuch an authority, ſhall I mention the teſtimony of *Seneca?* We are allowed to glean the grapes, when the vintage is gathered. In ſuch a view I would introduce the *philoſopher* after the SAVIOUR. *Omnia in omnibus vitia ſunt; ſed non omnia in ſingulis extant.* DE BENEF. lib. IV.

gence be exerted by us, unleſs gracious aſſiſtance be vouchſafed from above, they will aſſuredly ſpring up, over-run their ſouls, and diſhonour their lives.

Ther. Let us leave the children, and make *men* the ſubject of our inquiry.

Aſp. In this reſpect, *Theron*,

Men are but children of a larger growth.

We may leave the veſt or hanging-ſleeve coat, but we ſhall ſtill find the follies of the child.—In *youth*, what low ambition and fondneſs for deſpicable pleaſures.—In *manhood*, what a keen purſuit of tranſitory wealth, yet what a cold inattention to GOD and holineſs?—Men, and men too of the greateſt abilities, whoſe penetration on other ſubjects is piercing as the eagle's ſight, are, on the moſt important points, *blind* as the incaverned mole.

Ther. What! is the underſtanding like the moſt *dim-ſighted* animal, when lodged in her darkeſt retirement; that ſublime faculty of the ſoul; which lends her eye to all the reſt; ſits at the helm, and directs their motions!

Aſp. You remember, I preſume, that beautiful paſſage in *Milton* ‡; which Mr *Addiſon* ſo highly admires, and ſo judiciouſly illuſtrates. The paſſage I mean, where the archangel *Michael* comes down, to advertiſe *Adam* of future events, and to execute the ſentence of divine juſtice.

Ther. I remember it perfectly well.—In the eaſt, the great light of day lies under an eclipſe. In the weſt, a bright cloud deſcends; filled with an hoſt of angels, and more luminous than the ſun itſelf. The whole theatre of nature is darkened, that this glorious machine may appear in all its magnificence and beauty.—From this radiant chariot the *Potentate* of *heaven* alights, and advances with a majeſtic ſtatelineſs to meet *Adam*.

Aſp.

‡ Book XI. 203. *&c.*

Aſp. Should you ſee ſuch an auguſt perſonage, alighting from ſuch a ſplendid chariot, and walking amidſt the thronged ſtreets of a city?—ſhould you behold every one intent upon his buſineſs or diverſions, ſtruck with no *awe*, paying no *reverential* regard to this celeſtial viſitant; what would you think?

Ther. I ſhould certainly ſuſpect, that ſome ſuperior power had drawn a *veil* over their ſight, and hid this wonderful ſpectacle from their view.

Aſp. Such is really the caſe with all mankind by nature, and with the generality of people, during their whole life.—GOD, the infinitely-great GOD, is in every place. Yet how few *advert* to his preſence?—All nature exhibits him to their ſenſes; yet perhaps he is not in any of their thoughts.

The ſun clothed in tranſcendent brightneſs, moſt illuſtriouſly diſplays his MAKER's glory. The moon, though dreſſed in fainter beams, has luſtre enough to ſhew us the adorable DEITY, and his marvellous perfections. The ſtars, fixed as they are at an unmeaſurable diſtance, and *leſſened* almoſt to a point, come in with their evidence, and *magnify* their CREATOR to a gazing but unaffected world.

The air *whiſpers* his clemency in the gentle, the refreſhing gales of ſpring. If we take no notice of this ſoft perſuaſive addreſs, the tone is elevated; the majeſty of JEHOVAH *ſounds aloud*, in roaring winds, and rending ſtorms. Yet *both* expedients fail. Man is like the deaf adder, that ſtoppeth her ears. He refuſeth to hear the voice of the charmers, charm they never ſo ſweetly, never ſo forcibly.

Each flower, arrayed in beauty and breathing perfume, courts our affections for its infinitely-amiable AUTHOR.—Not a bird that warbles, nor a brook that murmurs, but invites our praiſe, or chides our ingratitude.—All the claſſes of fruits depoſit their atteſtation on our palates, yet ſeldom reach our hearts. They give us a proof of the divine benignity, a proof

as

as *undeniable* as it is pleaſing, and too often as *ineffectual* alſo.

In ſhort, the whole creation is a kind of magnificent embaſſy from its almighty LORD; deputed to proclaim *his excellencies*, and demand *our homage*. Yet who has not diſregarded the former, and with-held the latter?—How few walk, as ſeeing HIM that is inviſible, or have fellowſhip with the FATHER of ſpirits? though to walk before him, is our *higheſt* dignity; and to have fellowſhip with him is our *only* felicity?

Ther. This is owing to *inattention*, rather than to any blindneſs or defect in man's underſtanding. The many works of genius, which have been produced in various ages, are an abundant proof of his intellectual capacity.—Have not the ſeas been traverſed, and the ſkies meaſured? Has not the earth been diſembowelled of its choiceſt treaſures; while its ſurface is beautified with towns, cities, palaces innumerable? What fine arts are invented and exerciſed; and to what a pitch of perfection are they carried? Arts that ſeem, if not to exceed, at leaſt to *rival* nature.—It was the underſtanding, which formed all theſe great deſigns. It was the underſtanding, which contrived the means, and conducted the execution.—And are not theſe unqueſtionable evidences of her very ſuperior abilities?

Aſp. Then ſhe is like ſome great empreſs, who conquers half the world, but is unable to rule *herſelf;* who extends her regulations into foreign climes, while her domeſtic affairs are involved in confuſion.—Do you doubt the reality of this remark? Set yourſelf to meditate upon the moſt intereſting truths. How *deſultory*, how *incoherent* are your thoughts?—Charge them to be collected. They diſobey your orders.—Rally the undiſciplined vagrants. Again they deſert the taſk.—Exert all your power, and keep them cloſe to their buſineſs. Still they elude your endeavours.

The other day, I could not forbear ſmiling at a little adventure of your youngeſt ſon's Some *quick-*

ſilver

silver, which happened to be spilt upon the floor, parted into several globules. The shining balls looked so prettily, he longed to make them his own. But when he offered to take them up, they slipt from his hand. As soon as he renewed the attempt, so often he met with a disappointment. The closer he strove to grasp them, the more speedily they escaped from his fingers. He seemed at first to be amazed, then became quite angry, that the little *fugitives* should so constantly *baffle* his repeated efforts.—Thus unmanageable I very often find my own thoughts. If yours are under no better regimen, this may convince us both, that all is not according to the original creation.

We apply ourselves to converse with the everlasting GOD in *prayer*. Here one would expect to have the thoughts all clearness, and all composure. But here *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves* *. All those holy ideas, which create reverence, or strengthen faith, or quicken love, come from the FATHER of lights. Should HE withdraw his influence, all will be dull, and dark, and dead.—It may be we are somewhat enlivened in this sacred exercise; before we are aware, perhaps in the very midst of the solemn office, our attention is *dissipated*; and not dissipated only, but *scattered* to the ends of the earth. The GOD of all glory is forsaken, and the devotion paid to some senseless foppery. A malefactor, begging his life at the knees of his sovereign; and discontinuing his suit, in order to caress a *lap-dog*, or pursue a *butterfly*; is but a faint image of the vanity which attends our devotional services.—Reason, which ought to correct these irregularities, is treated like the incredulous lord; who, instead of controlling the unruly multitude, was overborne by their impetuosity, and trodden under foot †.

Since then the reins are struck out of our hands, and we have lost the rule over our own faculties; surely

* 2 Cor. iii. 5. † 2 Kings vii. 17.

ſurely we are in a ſtate different, very different from our primitive conſtitution.

Ther. However inſenſible to *refined* ſpeculation, the underſtanding, when *intereſt* is in the caſe, is apprehenſive enough.

Aſp. In temporal *, not in ſpiritual affairs.—Your younger brother, *Theron*, is a merchant. We will ſuppoſe him at the ſea-ſide; within a ſmall diſtance of the veſſel, on which a conſiderable part of his ſubſtance is embarked.—We will ſuppoſe the veſſel in the utmoſt diſtreſs, ready to founder with her leaks, or to ſtrike upon the rocks.—If he diſcovers no ſign of concern, calls in no aſſiſtance from the country, makes no effort to *ſave* the crew, and *ſecure* the cargo; would you not think him bereaved of his underſtanding, or deprived of his ſight?—Could you conceive a more favourable opinion of his eyes or his intellect; if inſtead of trying every method to prevent a ſhipwreck, he ſhould amuſe himſelf with picking *ſhells* from the ocean, or drawing *figures* on the ſand?

We, and every one of our fellow-creatures, have an intereſt in jeopardy, unſpeakably more precious, than all the rich lading of a thouſand fleets. Our ſouls, our immortal ſouls, are expoſed, every day, every hour, to the peril of *everlaſting deſtruction*. Every temptation is threatening to their endleſs welfare, as a ridge of craggy rocks to a ſhip that drives before the ſtrongeſt gale.—Yet how unconcerned are mankind? Where is their holy fear? where their godly jealouſy? where their wakeful circumſpection? Rather what a *gay inſenſibility* is obſervable in their behaviour? Or elſe, what a *lifeleſs formality* prevails in their ſupplications? their ſupplications to that almighty BEING, who alone is able to ſave and to deſtroy?—Was not the human underſtanding both darkened and benumbed, we ſhould ſee our neighbours, we

* Called therefore by the apoſtle, *fleſhly wiſdom*, and oppoſed to the grace of GOD, 2 *Cor.* i. 12.

we ſhould feel ourſelves awakened, into much the ſame earneſt ſolicitude, as the diſciples expreſſed, when, perceiving the waves boiſterous, and their bark ſinking, they cried, *LORD! ſave us! we periſh!*

But alas! in things of an unſeen nature, though of eternal conſequence, *intereſt*, that habitual darling of every heart, loſes its engaging influence. Nay, when eternity, all-important eternity is at ſtake, even *ſelf-preſervation* is ſcarce any longer a governing principle. —What can be more deplorable? and, if we admit not the doctrine of original corruption, what ſo unaccountable?

Ther. This, I muſt confeſs, is true with regard to the unthinking rabble. To them may be accommodated the remark of *Auguſtus;* who, when he ſaw ſome foreign females, carrying apes in their arms inſtead of infants, ſaid to one of his courtiers, "Have "the women of thoſe countries *no children*, that they "are ſo fond of ſuch deſpicable animals?"—The vulgar are ſo immerſed in ſecular cares, that one might indeed be tempted to aſk, "Have thoſe people *no ſouls*, "that buying and ſelling, eating and drinking, in-"groſs their whole concern?"—But perſons of rank and education think in a more exalted manner.

Aſp. Do you then imagine, that an elevation of circumſtances ſets the affections on things above? or that it is the peculiar infelicity of the *vulgar*, to *grovel* in their deſires?—Gold, I believe, is more likely to increaſe, than to diſſipate the fog on the mind. Abundance of poſſeſſions, inſtead of diſengaging the heart, faſten it more inſeparably to the earth. Even ſuperior attainments in learning, if not ſanctified by grace, ſerve only to render the owner ſomewhat more refined in his follies.—But compariſons between the various claſſes of mankind, are as uſeleſs as they are invidious. None, in either condition, attend to the things which make for their peace, till they are *awakened* from their lethargy, by the quickening SPIRIT of *CHRIST*.

And even then we cannot but obſerve evident indications of much *remaining* blindneſs.

How apt are ſuch perſons to miſtake the way of ſalvation? to place their own works for a foundation of hope, inſtead of *CHRIST* the Rock of ages? thinking by their own performances to *win*, not ſeeking from unmerited grace to *receive*, the inheritance of eternal glory. Which is more abſurdly vain, than to offer toys as an equivalent for thrones, or to dream of purchaſing diadems with a mite.—They are alſo prone to miſapprehend the nature of holineſs; are zealous to regulate the *external* conduct, without attending to the renovation of the *heart;* in outward forms elaborate; with reſpect to inward ſanctity, leſs if at all exact. A labour juſt as prepoſterous, as to ſkin over the ſurface of a wound, while it feſters at the bottom, and conſumes the bone.

Give me leave to aſk, *Theron;* When our LORD declares, *Unleſs a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven* *; when he ſpeaks of *eating his fleſh*, and *drinking his blood* †, when you hear or read of union with the bleſſed *JESUS*, or communion with the moſt high GOD: is there not a cloud, if not total darkneſs, on your mind‡?—How erroneous was the *Pſalmiſt* himſelf, in his judgment concerning the divine diſpoſals? *So fooliſh was I and ignorant, even*

* John iii. 3. † John vi. 54.

‡ With regard to the myſteries of *CHRIST*, the greateſt proficients are but *obtuſe acute*, dull even in their acuteneſs.—What ſays the wiſe *Agur?* an invaluable fragment of whoſe works is preſerved in the book of *Proverbs. Surely I am more brutiſh than any man, and have not the underſtanding of a man:* even tho' the following verſes beſpeak the very ſingular elevation and extent of his knowledge. *Prov.* xxx. 2.—Conformably to the experience of this excellent man, I have always obſerved, that the more enlightened people are, the more they lament their ignorance; the more they pant after a continual progreſs in heavenly knowledge; and pray for clearer, ſtill clearer manifeſtations of the incomprehenſible GOD.

even as it were a beaſt, or as the verieſt beaſt *before thee* *.—The voice of experience therefore will atteſt what the word of revelation has averred, That the *natural man*, be his intellectual abilities ever ſo pregnant, or ever ſo improved, *cannot know the things of the SPIRIT of GOD* †: he has no ſight to diſcern their beauty, no taſte to reliſh their ſweetneſs. Nay, tho' they are the pureſt light, and the moſt perfect wiſdom, to him they appear, not only dark and obſcure, but even *fooliſhneſs* itſelf.

Would this be the caſe, if the underſtanding was not greatly depraved? Should it be difficult for your ear, to diſtinguiſh the diverſity of ſounds; or for your eye, to diſcern the variety of colours; would you not conclude, that the organs were very much *impaired?*

Ther. I think, you have treated the underſtanding, as *Zopyrus* ſerved his own body‡, when he went over to the enemy.—Do you intend to mangle the other faculties at the ſame unmerciful rate?

Aſp. That noblemen *made* the wounds, which diſfigured his fleſh. I have only *probed* the ſores, which were found in the underſtanding. If I have touched the quick, and put the patient to pain, it is only to facilitate the operation of medicine, and make way for a cure.—But permit me to aſk, Wherein does the excellency of the human *will* conſiſt?

Ther. In following the guidance of reaſon, and ſubmitting to the influence of proper authority.

Aſp. The will, I fear, rejects the government of rea-

* I queſtion, whether *Aſpaſio*'s tranſlation comes fully up to the emphaſis of the original. The comparative particle is omitted in the *Hebrew*. *As* ſoftens and palliates the matter. Therefore the *Pſalmiſt*, to expreſs the deepeſt ſenſe of his ignorance, ſays, *I was a beaſt*, yea, *the verieſt beaſt*, נבער Pſal. lxxiii. 22.

† 1 Cor. ii 14.

‡ *See* ROLLIN's *ancient hiſt.* vol. III. *p.* 46.

ſon; and it is undeniably certain, that it rebels againſt the authority of GOD.

Caſt your eye upon that *team* of *horſes*, with which yonder countryman is ploughing his fallow-ground. No leſs than five of thoſe robuſt animals are linked together, and yield their ſubmiſſive necks to the draught. They have more ſtrength than twenty men, yet are managed by a *ſingle lad*. They not only ſtand in awe of the laſh, but liſten to the voice of their driver. They turn to the right hand or to the left; they quicken their pace, or ſtop ſhort in the furrow; at the bare intimation of his pleaſure.—Are *we* equally obedient to the calls, to the exhortations, the expreſs injunctions of our heavenly LORD? The bleſſed *JESUS* ſpoke at the beginning, and the world was made. He ſpeaks by his providence, and the univerſe is upheld. When he ſhall ſpeak at the laſt day, the heavens will paſs away, and the earth be diſſolved. Yet he ſpeaks to us in his divine word, and we turn a deaf ear to his addreſs. He ſpeaks in tender expoſtulations, and no melting of heart enſues. He ſpeaks in precious promiſes, and no ardent deſires are enkindled.—The will, which, in theſe caſes, ought to be turned as *wax* to the *ſeal*, is unimpreſſed and inflexible as an *iron ſinew*.

Ther. The human will is conſtantly inclined to preſerve, accommodate, and make its poſſeſſor happy. Is not this the right *poſition*, in which it ſhould always ſtand? or the moſt deſirable *direction*, that can be given to its motions?

Aſp. I ſhould be glad, if fact bore witneſs to your aſſertion. But fact, I apprehend, is on the contrary ſide.—I took notice, as we came along, of ſome *ants* buſily employed on a little hillock. Have you made any obſervations, *Theron*, on this reptile community?

Ther. It is a little *republic* *. They inhabit a kind of

* See *Nat. Diſpl.* vol. I.

of oblong city, divided into various ſtreets. They are governed by laws, and regulated by politics, of their own. Their magazines are commodiouſly formed, and judiciouſly guarded againſt the injuries of the weather. Some are defended by an arch made of earth, and cemented with a peculiar ſort of glue. Some are covered with rafters of ſlender wood, and thatched with ruſhes or graſs. The roof is always raiſed with a double ſlope, to turn away the current of the waters, and ſhoot the rain from their ſtore-houſes. They all *beſtir* themſelves, with *inceſſant* aſſiduity, while the air is ſerene; while the roads are good; and abundance of looſe grain lies ſcattered over the fields.—By theſe precautions, they live ſecure, when ſtorms embroil the ſky; they want no manner of conveniency, even when winter lays waſte the plains.

Aſp. Do *we* improve, ſo diligently, our preſent opportunities? This life is the ſeed-time of eternity. Do we huſband the precious moments like perſons ſenſible of their unſpeakable importance? ſenſible, that if we trifle and are indolent, *they* will be irrecoverably gone, and *we* irretrievably ruined?

Sickneſs, we know not how ſoon, may invade us, pain may torment us, and both may iſſue in our final diſſolution. Are we duly aware of theſe awful changes, and properly ſolicitous to put all in order for their approach?—We walk (alarming thought!) upon the very brink of death, reſurrection, and judgment. Do we walk like *wiſe virgins*, with our loins girt; with our lamps trimmed; in a ſtate of continual readineſs, for the heavenly BRIDEGROOM's advent?

Thoſe ants *have no guide, overſeer, or ruler. Yet prepare their meat in the ſummer, and gather their food in the harveſt* *. We have all theſe, yet neglect the time of our viſitation.—We have GOD's unerring word,

* Prov. vi. 7.

word, to guide us; GOD's ever-watchful eye, to overſee us; GOD's ſovereign command, to rule and quicken us. Notwithſtanding all theſe motives, is not the ſpeech of the ſluggard, the very language of our conduct? *A little more ſleep, a little more ſlumber, a little more folding of the hands to ſleep* *. The moſt ſupine indifference, where all poſſible diligence is but juſt ſufficient!—This, you muſt allow, is the true character of mankind in general. And does this demonſtrate the *rectitude* of their will?

Ther. The underſtanding may be ſaid to carry the torch, the will to hold the balance. Now, the perfection of a balance conſiſts, in being ſo nicely poiſed, as to incline at the *leaſt* touch, and preponderate with the *ſlighteſt* weight. This property belongs, without all diſpute, to the human will.

Aſp. What? if one of your ſcales ſhould deſcend to the ground, though charged with trifles, that are light as air? if the other ſhould kick the beam, though its contents be weightier than talents of gold?—Is not this an exact repreſentation of our will, when the *fleeting* pleaſures of ſenſe, or the *puny* intereſts of time, excite our wiſhes; even while the ſolid delights of religion, and the immenſely-rich treaſures of immortality, can hardly obtain our attention?—However, let us quit the metaphor, and examine fact. Suppoſe I make

* There is, if I miſtake not, a nice gradation, in this ſpeech, of the ſluggard; ſuch as very naturally *mimics* the manner of that lazy creature.—He pleads, firſt, for ſome conſiderable degree of indulgence, *A little ſleep.*—If that is too much to be granted he craves ſome ſmaller toleration of his ſloth; *A little ſlumber.*—If the taſkmaſter ſtill rings in his ear, ſtill goads his ſide; one almoſt ſees him, rubbing his heavy eyes, and yawning out his laſt requeſt; *A little folding of the hands* at leaſt *to lie down*, מעט תנום חבק ידים Prov. vi. 10.—When ſuch is our conduct with regard to *eternal* intereſt, how juſtly may we apply that ſpirited expoſtulation of the poet;

Tantamne rem tam negligenter!

made it appear, that, instead of chusing the most eligible objects, the will is so deplorably vitiated, as to *loath* what is salutary, and be *fond* of what is baneful.

Ther. If you prove this to be universally the case, you will prove your favourite point with a witness.

Asp. When Providence is pleased to thwart our measures, or defeat our endeavours; to bring us under the cloud of disgrace, or lay upon us the rod of affliction; what is our behaviour?—Do we bow our heads in *humble* resignation? Do we open our mouths in *thankful* acknowledgments?—Observe the waters in that elegant octangular bason. They assimilate themselves, with the utmost readiness, and with equal exactness, to the vessel that contains them. *So* would the human will, if it were not extremely froward and foolish, conform itself to the divine; which is unerringly wise, and, of all possible contingencies, incomparably the best*.—Yet how apt are we to fret with disquietude; and struggle under afflictive dispensations, *as a wild bull in a net!*

Ther. This is a very imperfect proof, *Aspasio*, and corresponds only with part of your accusation. We may dislike what is wholesome, especially if it be unpalatable, yet not be fond of our bane.

Asp. Should you see a person, who thirsts after the putrid lake, but disrelishes the running fountain; who longs for the *empoisoned* berries of the nightshade, but abhors the *delicious* fruit of the orchard; would you applaud the regularity of his appetite?—I don't wait for

* This seems to be the meaning of the prophet, מישרים נתיבות צדיק. Is. xxvi. 7. Not—*The way of the just is uprightness*—This sense, in the present connection, is hardly consistent with humility; is by no means proper, to introduce a devotional address to the great JEHOVAH. Rather—*GOD's way to the just is uprightness;* or, still more emphatically, *uprightnesses;* is in *all* respects irreprovable, excellent, admirable; suited, perfectly suited, to every sacred attribute of wisdom, goodness, and truth.

for your anſwer. But I more than ſuſpect, this is a true picture of all unregenerate people. How do they affect dreſs and external ornament; but are unwilling, rather than deſirous, to be *clothed with humility* *, and *to put on CHRIST* †! Amuſement will engage, play animate, and diverſion fire them: but as to the worſhip of the living GOD, O! *what a wearineſs is it* ‡! This is attended, if attended at all, with languor, and a liſtleſs inſenſibility. Frothy novels, and flatulent wit, regale their taſte; while the marrow and fatneſs of the divine word are as "their ſorrowful meat ‖." What is all this, but to loath the ſalutary, and long † for the baneful?

Let me from the ſame compariſon, propoſe one queſtion more, which may be applicable both to the will and to the underſtanding.—Should you hear of another perſon, the ſtate of whoſe ſtomach was ſo diſpoſed,

* 1 Pet. v. 5. † Rom. xiii. 14. ‡ Mal. i. 13. ‖ Job vi. 7.

† The reader may ſee this unhappy contraſt drawn in the ſtrongeſt colours, by the royal preacher, and by the mourning prophet.—*Becauſe I have called, and* ye refuſed; *I have ſtretched out my hand, and* no man regarded; *but ye have* ſet at nought *all my counſel, and* would none *of my reproof.* What a croud of words! emphatically declaring the moſt incorrigible perverſeneſs; which is a proof againſt every method of reformation, againſt all the arts even of divine perſuaſion. *Prov.* i. 24, 25.—*The hoſt of heaven, whom they have* loved, *and whom they have* ſerved, *and after whom they have* walked, *and whom they have* ſought, *and whom they have* worſhipped. What a heap of expreſſions! ſignificantly deſcribing that impetuous ardor, which no prohibitions can reſtrain; and that inſatiable avidity, which never knows when to ſay, "It "is enough." *Jer.* viii. 2.

If I beg leave to add another example of this kind, it is chiefly for the ſake of clearing up an obſcure paſſage in the *Pſalms*; which ſeems to have been miſtaken by the authors of *both* our verſions.—*David*, to ſet forth the barbarous aſſiduity of his perſecutors, ſays, *They wander up and down.* They pry into every corner; they ſearch the city, and examine the country; לאכל not *for meat*; which, in this connection, is a ſenſe quite foreign to the ſubject, and very jejune indeed; but

to

poſed, that it turned the moſt nouriſhing food into phlegm; and derived matter of *diſeaſe*, from the moſt ſovereign ſupports of *health;* what would you think of this conſtitution?

Ther. I ſhould certainly think it very much diſtempered.

Aſp. Without the grace of our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*, our ſouls turn *every* occurrence into an increaſe of their final depravity. Our very table is a ſnare; and inſtead of exciting us to gratitude, is a provocative to gluttony.—How difficult is it, when we flow in plenty, not to be elated; when we are preſſed with poverty, not to repine!—Have we buſineſs in the world? It cumbers our thoughts, or tempts us to avarice. Have we no buſineſs to manage? We ſink into ſloth, and ſettle on the lees of voluptuouſneſs.—If our ſchemes are proſperous, it is odds but they attach us to the intereſts of time. If they prove unſucceſsful, we too often are chagrined with the diſappointment, and ſin againſt meekneſs.—Even the holy commandment, inſtead of reſtraining ſin, or producing obedience, irritates the inbred depravity; and renders it more reſtleſs, more impetuous, more ungovernable *.—Thoſe very *things*, *which ſhould have been for our welfare*, (ſo malignant and raging is our corruption!) *are* converted into *an occaſion of falling*.

Ther. The will is under no *neceſſity* of miſemploying her powers. She is *free* to act in this manner or in that; and, if a ſpendthrift, is not a ſlave.

Aſp. In actions which relate to the *animal* œconomy, the

to devour; to devour me the deſtined victim of their rage. *And if they are not ſatisfied*, if they cannot compaſs their deſign by day, *then they will grudge?* No; but *they will continue all night*, in the proſecution of their purpoſe. Neither cold nor darkneſs can retard them; neither hardſhips nor dangers can divert them; but their attempts are as *indefatigable*, as their malice is *implacable*. Pſal. lix. 15.

* Rom. vii. 8.

the will is unqueſtionably free. She can contract the forehead into a frown, or expand it with a ſmile.—In the *ordinary* affairs of life, ſhe is under no control. We can undertake or decline a journey, carry on or diſcontinue an employ, juſt as we pleaſe.—In the *outward* acts of religion alſo, the will is her own miſtreſs. We can read the word of GOD, or go to the place of divine worſhip, without any extraordinary aid from above.—But in matters which are more intimately connected with our ſalvation, the caſe is different. Here, as our liturgy expreſſes it, "we are *tied* and "*bound* with the chain of our ſins."

Would you have a perſon delight himſelf in the LORD; take pleaſure in devotion; ſet his affections on things above?—All this is both his duty and his happineſs. But alas! *He is alienated from the life of GOD.* His inclinations gravitate quite the contrary way. His will is in the condition of that diſtreſſed woman, who was *bowed down with a ſpirit of infirmity, and could in no wiſe lift up herſelf* *. Corruption like a ſtrong bias influences, or rather like a heavy mountain oppreſſes his mind. Neither can he ſhake off the propenſity, or ſtruggle away from the load, until grace, almighty grace, interpoſes for his releaſe.—*Where the SPIRIT of the LORD is, there* and there alone *is liberty* †; that ſacred and glorious liberty, which is not the common privilege of all men, but the high prerogative of the children of GOD.

Would you have a perſon apply to the great REDEEMER; apply with a real ardor of deſire; as *Bartimæus* of old, or the *Syrophænician* mother?—His will is like the withered arm; cannot ſtretch forth itſelf to the all-gracious SAVIOUR: cannot hunger and thirſt after his everlaſting righteouſneſs and infinite merit; till the SAVIOUR himſelf ſpeaks power into the *enfeebled*, the *perverted* faculty.—If you think

* Luke xiii. 11. † 2 Cor. iii. 17.

think otherwise; try the experiment. Persuade men to this necessary practice. Urge the most weighty arguments; devise the most pathetic expostulations; let zeal summon all her force, and rhetoric employ all her art. Without being a prophet, I dare venture to foretell the issue. Disappointments, repeated disappointments, will convince you, that our divine MASTER knew what he said, when he solemnly declared, *No man can come to me, except the FATHER, which hath sent me, draw him* *.—Our church, in conformity to this and other scriptures, has taught us to pray, *Turn thou us, O good LORD;* for nothing but thy omnipotent agency is capable of doing it; *and so shall we be turned.*

Ther. Are we slaves then? Will *Christianity* send us to seek our brethren, in the mines or in the galleys?

Asp. Christianity does not *send*, but *find* us there. There, or in a worse slavery†.—It is doubtless a most abject state, to wear the yoke, and truckle in chains. Yet such, I apprehend, is the state of our minds by

* *John* vi. 44. It is not said, The FATHER *drives*, but *draws:* not by violent, irrational, compulsive means; but by clear conviction, sweet persuasion, and inducements suited to a reasonable being. *Those* are the cords of a beast, *these* of a man. So that we are not acted upon as clock-work, or influenced as mere machines, but *made willing* in the day of his power, *Psal.* cx. 3.

† St *Paul* says of *Christians*, and reckons himself in the number, that naturally they *served* (not διακονουντες but δουλευοντες, were absolute slaves to) *divers lusts and pleasures*, Tit. iii. 3. The whole verse is very remarkable, and nothing can be more apposite to *Aspasio*'s purpose. It shews us, what *they* were by nature, who through grace became living images of the blessed GOD.

This mortifying doctrine is often acknowledged by our church. Thus begins one of her public supplications; *Almighty GOD, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful man.* It seems, we cannot determine our own wills, nor regulate our own affections. What is this but bondage?

nature. To prove this, we need not go down to the loweſt ranks of life. *Theſe*, you might ſay with the prophet, *are poor; theſe are fooliſh; they have not known the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their GOD.—I will get me* therefore *to the great men**, and examine their diſpoſition.

Have you not known perſons of the greateſt intrepidity, and firmeſt reſolution, hurried away by their luſts, as "a rolling thing before the whirlwind†?" Perhaps, they were bold enough to face danger, and defy the ſword, in the field of battle; yet were no more able to withſtand the wanton illurements of beauty, or the ſoft ſolicitations of pleaſure, than the *moth* can forbear fluttering about the flame, even though it ſinges her wings, and is ſcorching her to death.—Others, poſſeſſed of a refined imagination, diſdain the groſs indulgencies of ſenſuality; yet are ſlaves to their own *domineering* paſſions. They are blown into the moſt intemperate rage, and puſhed on to the moſt extravagant actions, by every little ruffling accident. They ſee the *meanneſs*, which ſuch an ungovernable ſpirit argues; they feel the *miſery*, which ſuch internal tempeſts create; nay, they reſolve to ſuppreſs the impetuoſity of their temper: yet are bore away by the torrent; and, upon the very firſt provocation, are as furiouſly reſentful as ever.—Will you call *theſe* perſons free, becauſe their taſkmaſters and their tyrants are lodged within‡? becauſe the fetters are forged, not for the meaner, but for the immortal part of their nature?

Ther. Let us paſs to the *affections*. Theſe are to the ſoul, what wings are to the eagle, or ſails to the ſhip. Theſe

* Jer. v. 4, 5. † Iſ. xvii. 13.

‡ ——————*Inordinate deſires*
And upſtart paſſions catch the government
From reaſon, and to ſervitude reduce
Man, till then free. MILT.

These always stand ready to receive the gales of interest, and to spring at the signal of reason.

Asp. O! that they did!—But, if the wings are clogged with mire; if the sails are disproportioned to the ballast; what advantage will accrue, either to the animal, or to the vessel?—The one will, probably, be overset in the voyage; the other will lie grovelling on the ground.

Ther. Desire seems to be the first, which "opens the "mouth, or moves the wing, or peeps *." Desire is active as a flame, and ever in pursuit of happiness.

Asp. What if your flame, instead of shooting upwards, should point its *inverted* spires to the earth? Would not this be strange, and a sign of great disorder?—GOD is the centre of perfection, and the source of felicity. All that is amiable in itself, is comprehended in GOD. All that is beneficial to us, proceeds from GOD. Do our desires uniformly *tend* to this superexcellent being? Do our wishes *terminate* in the enjoyment of his ever-glorious Majesty? Alas! we are naturally estranged from him: we covet no communion with him. We are wedded to trifles, and dote upon vanity: but *to GOD we say*,—it is evidently the language of our conduct,—*Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways* †.

If desire is the first-born among the affections, observe it in children. There it appears in its dawn, and has most of pure nature.—See, how those *flies*, exulting in the sunny gleam, vibrate with all the rapidity of motion their little wings ‡. So prompt and expedite are the desires of children to any corrupting diversion.—See, how sluggishly that *snail*, crawling forth

* Is. x. 14. † Job xxi. 14.

‡ The wings of a fly are supposed to have the *quickest* motion, of any material substance which lives. And if they make, as naturalists imagine, some hundreds of vibrations in a second of time, I think, there can be no competition in the case.

forth amidſt the refreſhing moiſture, drags her ſlow length along. So dull, if not reluctant, are the diſpoſitions of our children to any improving exerciſe. Rewards will hardly win them to the latter; the rod can hardly deter them from the former.—And none, none but GOD, "by his *ſpecial* grace preventing "them, can put into their minds good deſires *."

Is our *love* under better regulation?—How eaſily are we captivated with a fair complexion and graceful form, eſpecially when ſet off with the decorations of dreſs! but how little affected with the beauty of internal character; with the ornaments of virtue, and the graces of *Chriſtianity?* Can it be ſuppoſed, that the pulſe of the ſoul beats regularly, when there is ſuch a *paſſionate fondneſs* for fading embelliſhments, and ſuch a *cold indifference* for the moſt ſubſtantial endowments?—How ready are we to be enamoured with well-proportioned clay, often to our apparent prejudice, ſometimes to our utter ruin! yet how backward to love that infinitely loving and lovely REDEEMER, who would die himſelf, rather than we ſhould become a prey to death! Tinder we are, perfect tinder to the ſparks of irrational and diſſolute affection; harder than adamant, colder than ice, to this heavenly flame.

Ther. If our love is blind, our *fear* has not loſt her eyes. Fear is quick of apprehenſion; and, inſtead of being ſtupidly inſenſible, is ready to "riſe up at the "voice of a bird †."

Aſp. The paſſion of fear is ſufficiently active, but deplorably *miſapplied*.—We fear the reproach of men. But are we alarmed at the view of that *everlaſting ſhame*, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, ſhall pour upon the ungodly? We ſhudder at the drawn dagger, and ſtand appalled at the headlong precipice. But how often have we defied the ſword of almighty vengeance, and ſported upon the brink of irretrievable perdition?

Sin

* *Collect* for *Eaſter-day*. † Eccl. xii. 4.

Sin is the moſt pernicious of all evils. Sin violates the divine command, and provokes the divine MAJESTY. Sin offers deſpite to the bleſſed SPIRIT, and tramples upon the blood of *JESUS*. For ſin, the tranſgreſſor is baniſhed from the bliſsful preſence of GOD, and doomed to dwell with inextinguiſhable burnings. Do we dread this *grand deſtroyer* of our happineſs? dread it more than any calamities, more than all plagues?—Take one of thoſe fine may-dukes, which glow with ſo beautiful a ſcarlet on yonder eſpalier. Offer it to the *blackbird*, that ſerenades us from the neighbouring elm. The creature, tho' fond of the dainty, will fly from your hand, as haſtily as from a levelled fowling-piece. He ſuſpects a deſign upon his liberty; and therefore will endure any extremity, will even ſtarve to death, rather than taſte the *moſt tempting* delicacy in ſuch hazardous circumſtances.—Are we equally fearful of an infinitely-greater danger? Do we fly, with equal ſolicitude *, from the deluſive but deſtructive wiles of ſin? Alas! do not we too often *ſwallow* the bait, even when we plainly diſcover the fatal hook? Do we not *ſnatch* the forbidden fruit, tho' conſcience remonſtrates, tho' GOD prohibits, tho' death eternal threatens?

Ther. Conſcience then, according to your own account, has eſcaped the general ſhipwreck. Conſcience is GOD's vicegerent in the ſoul, and executes her office faithfully. Even the Gentiles *ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs, and their thoughts the meanwhile accuſing or elſe excuſing one another* †.

Aſp.

* The *inſtigating* admonition, tranſmitted to *Brentius* by an anonymous letter, when the Papiſts had formed a plot againſt his life, ſhould be the rule of our conduct on ſuch an occaſion; *Fuge! fuge! cito—citius—citiſſime.*

† *Rom.* ii. 15. Methinks, I would not tranſlate the word μεταξὺ *the meanwhile*, but *alternately* or *interchangeably* accuſing

or

Asp. If there be any remains of the divine image, perhaps, they are to be found in the conſcience. But even this is not exempt from the common ruin.—Conſider its *light*. It is like a dim taper, feebly glimmering, and ſerving only to make the darkneſs viſible. Or, if it diſcovers any thing, it is an obſcure ſomething, we know not what: which, inſtead of informing, tantalizes us, and inſtead of guiding, bewilders us. As falſe and deluſory lights on the ſhore, put a cheat upon the mariner, and lead him on to ruin *. —Conſider its *operations*. It is either dumb or dead, or both. *Dumb;* or elſe how vehemently would it upbraid us, for our ſhocking ingratitude to the ſupreme omnipotent BENEFACTOR? How loudly would it inveigh againſt our ſtupid neglect of ſpiritual intereſts, and eternal ages? *Dead;* otherwiſe how keenly would it ſmart, when gaſhed with wounds, —*numerous*, as our repeated violations of the divine law,—*deep*, as the horrid aggravations of our various iniquities?

Ther. Do you call this an anſwer to my objection, *Aſpaſio?* If it be an anſwer, it reſembles, in point of ſatisfactory evidence, the light which you aſcribe unto the conſcience.

Aſp. The *Gentiles*, you alledge, ſhew the *work*, but not the *love* of the law, written on their hearts. Some leading notices of right and wrong they have; ſome ſpeculative

or excuſing; ſometimes one, ſometimes the other; in conformity to the different circumſtances of their temper and behaviour.

* This ſeems to have been the caſe with the bulk of the *Heathen* world.—Conſcience arraigned, and found them guilty. This put them upon practiſing their *abominable*, ſometimes their *inhuman* idolatries.—Nay, this induced them to give the moſt ſcandalous and impious miſrepreſentations of the DEITY. That they might *ſheath* the ſting of conſcience, and find ſome *ſalvo* for their own iniquities, they made even the objects of their worſhip, the *patrons* and the *precedents* of their favourite vices.

ſpeculative ſtrictures of good and evil; but without a *real abhorrence* of the one, or a *cordial delight* in the other: which, far from ennobling their nature, far from vindicating their practice, argues the exceeding depravity of the former, and renders the latter abſolutely without excuſe.

No; you ſay, conſcience *excuſes* the Heathens. Rather, their conſcience *bears witneſs* to the equity of the law, while their thoughts *make ſome* weak *apology** for the tenor of their conduct. This is far from acquitting, far from juſtifying them.—Beſides, theſe weak attempts to excuſe, are always founded on *ignorance*. Did they know themſelves, their duty, or their GOD; conſcience would, without the leaſt heſitation, bring in her verdict, *Guilty*:—The apoſtle aſſures us, that, till faith, which is a divine principle, takes place in our breaſts, *both the mind and conſcience are defiled*†: here, and elſewhere, very plainly intimating, that the conſcience is evil, and ever will be evil, till it is *ſprinkled with the blood of CHRIST*‡.

It *accuſes* ſome, I acknowledge; and it ought to accuſe, yea, to condemn all. But even here it evidences itſelf to be corrupt. For its accuſations are ſometimes *erroneous* ||, and no better than falſe witneſs; ſometimes

* The word is απολογουμενων, not επιμαρτυρουντων, not δικαιουντων.

† Tit. i. 15. ‡ Heb. x. 22.

|| *Erroneous*—What elſe was that grand article in the accuſations of conſcience, mentioned, with ſuch particular diſtinction, by *Virgil*?

——Phlegyaſque miſerrimus omnes
Admonet, et magna teſtatur voce per umbras,
Diſcite juſtitiam moniti, et non temnere divos.

For men to *deſpiſe* ſuch dunghill, worſe than dunghill-deities, had been their *virtue* if done, and was their *duty* to do.—What elſe was that voice of conſcience, mentioned by our LORD, *John* xvi. 2. or that confeſſed by the apoſtle, *Acts* xxvi 9.?

ſometimes *partial* * and ſuborned by appetite; and very, very often *ineffectual*.—Nay, when they do take effect, they produce no fruit that is truly good. They work not a genuine humiliation, or an unfeigned repentance; but either a ſlaviſh dread of GOD, as a ſevere judge; or hatred of him, as an inexorable enemy.

Ther. Hatred of GOD—Aſtoniſhing impiety! Is it poſſible for the human heart to admit ſuch enormous, almoſt incredible wickedneſs?

Aſp. You may well be aſtoniſhed, *Theron;* and GOD may juſtly demand; *What iniquity have my people found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity* †? "I created you out of no-"thing, and endowed you with an immortal ſoul. As "a father, I have provided for you. As a nurſe, I have "cheriſhed you.—I have conſigned over to your poſ-"ſeſſion the earth, and the fulneſs thereof. All my "creatures do you ſervice, and even my angels mini-"ſter unto your good.—Do you deſire greater de-"monſtrations of my love? I have given what was "dearer to me than all angels, than all worlds. I "have given my SON from my boſom, to die in "your ſtead.—Would you have farther evidences of "my tender, my diſtinguiſhed regard? Behold! I "touch the mountains, and they ſmoke: I look up-"on the earth, and it trembles: I caſt even the princes "of heaven, when they break my law, into chains "of darkneſs. But to you, O men, I condeſcend to "act as a ſupplicant. Though highly injured, and "horribly

* *Partial*—Otherwiſe how could the moſt celebrated among the ancient heroes applaud and practiſe that execrable unnatural crime, *ſelf-murder?* How could their firſt-rate hiſtorians extol and almoſt conſecrate that diabolical principle of action, *pride?* And how could their ableſt teachers of morality, not only tolerate, but eſtabliſh the error, by neglecting to find ſo much as a name for that amiable virtue, *humility?*

† Jer. ii. 5.

" horribly affronted, I *beſeech* you, again and again I " *beſeech* you to be reconciled.

To hate * *ſuch* a GOD, is indeed the moſt deteſtable impiety. Yet man, fooliſh man, practiſes this impiety, whenever, for the ſake of a vile luſt, an ignoble pleaſure, or an unruly paſſion, he tranſgreſſes the command of his CREATOR.

Shall I exemplify the doctrine, in another of the affections?

Ther. In truth *Aſpaſio*, I begin to be ſick of the ſubject. If human nature is ſo ulcerated, the leſs you touch it the better.—However, let us not quite omit the *iraſcible* appetite.

Aſp. Of this we have already taken a ſide-view; if you chuſe to ſee it in fuller proportion, make your obſervation on *Fervidus*.—*Fervidus* comes home in a rage. His cheeks are pale, and his lips quiver with exceſs of paſſion. Though he can hardly ſpeak, he vows revenge, and utters imprecations.—What is the cauſe of all this wondrous ferment? A neighbour, it ſeems, has dropt ſome reflecting hint, or a ſervant has blundered in ſome trifling meſſage. Such uſage, *Fervidus* ſays, is intolerable; and ſuch negligence unpardonable. —This ſame *Fervidus* has offered numberleſs affronts to his MAKER; he has moſt ſcandalouſly neglected the will of his almighty LORD; yet feels no indignation againſt *himſelf*.—He is all fury, when his own credit is touched. But when the intereſt of *CHRIST* is wounded, he can ſit unconcerned, or paſs it off with a laugh.—Anger, I acknowledge, is ſometimes becoming and uſeful. But is *this* its right temperature? *this* its proper application?

* Hatred of GOD is ſo *ſhocking* an expreſſion, that one would almoſt wiſh never to hear or read it. But it occurs in our unerring book, is too often exemplified in common life; and is engraven by corrupt nature on every human heart. See *Rom.* i. 30. *Exod.* xx. 5. *John* xv. 25. *Rom.* viii. 7.

Ther This is the practice only of some few turbulent spirits. To saddle *their* qualities upon *every* person, is a procedure just as equitable, as the madman's* calculation was reasonable, who took an account of every ship which entered the harbour, and set it down for his own.

Asp. The latter part of my charge, I fear, is applicable to more than a few.—However, let us consider the most *calm* and *sedate* minds. How are they affected under injuries? Do they never aggravate failings into crimes? Do they find it easy to abstain from every emotion of ill-will? easy to love their enemies, and do good to those who hate them? These godlike tempers, if our nature was not degenerated, would be the *spontaneous* produce of the soul. But now, alas! they are not raised, without much difficulty; seldom come to any considerable degree of eminence; never arrive at a state of true perfection. An undoubted proof, that they are *exotics* not *natives* of the soil.

Now we are speaking of plants, cast your eye upon the kitchen-garden. Many of those herbs will perfume the *hard* hand which crushes them, and embalm the *rude* foot which tramples on them. Such was the benign conduct of our LORD. He always overcame evil with good. When his disciples disregarded him in his bitter agony, he made the *kindest* excuse for their ungrateful stupidity†. When his enemies, with unparalleled barbarity, spilt his very blood; he *pleaded* their ignorance, as an extenuation of their guilt ‡.—Is the same spirit in us, which was also in our divine MASTER? Then are our passions rightly poised, and duly tempered. But if resentment kindles, and animosity rankles in our hearts; this is an infallible sign, that we swerve from our SAVIOUR's pattern; consequently, are fallen from our primitive rectitude.

Ther.

* *Thrasilus, an Athenian.*

† Matth. xxvi. 41. ‡ Luke xxiii. 34.

Ther. What say you of the *fancy?* This sure, if no other, retains the primitive rectitude. What pictures does she form, and what excursions does she make? She can dive to the bottom of the ocean, can soar to the height of the stars, and walk upon the boundaries of creation.

Asp. That the fancy is lively and excursive, I readily grant. It can out-travel the post, or outfly the eagle. But if it travel, only to pick *shells;* or fly abroad, to bring home *mischief;* then, I apprehend, tho' you should admire the faculty, you will hardly be in raptures with its agency.—This is the real truth. Our fancy, till divine grace regulate and exalt its operations, is generally employed in picking painted shells, or culling venomous herbs: *weaving* (as the prophet very elegantly, and no less exactly describes the case) *the spider's web, or hatching cockatrice-eggs* *: busied in the most absurd impertinencies; or acting in speculation the vilest iniquities. That which should be *a garden inclosed, a fountain sealed* †, for the PRINCE of peace, is the thoroughfare of vanity. —And even when we are renewed from above, O! how necessary is it to keep an incessant watch, and exercise a strict discipline, over this volatile, variable, treacherous *vagrant!*

The *memory*, as well as the fancy, is impaired; or, if not impaired, is debauched. Why else does it so firmly *retain* the impressions of an injury, but so easily *let slip* the remembrance of a benefit? Any idle fopperies, which sooth our vanity, and increase our corruption, cleave to the thoughts, as the vexatious burr to our cloaths. While the noble truths of the gospel, and the rich mercies of a gracious GOD, slide away from the mind, and leave no lasting trace behind them. This double perverseness is very emphatically and too truly represented by *Jeremiah; Can a maid forget*

* Is. lix. 5. † Cant. iv. 12.

forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number *.—If we hear a loose hint, or read an immodest expression, they are almost sure to fasten themselves on our memory. If shaken off, they follow us with a troublesome importunity. If excluded, as unwelcome visitants, they force themselves, again and again, upon our imagination. They dog us to the closet; they haunt our most retired hours; and too often disturb our very devotions.—Tell me now, can that faculty be upright and uncorrupted, which is a *perforated sieve*, to transmit the beneficial; but a *thirsty sponge*, to imbibe the pernicious †?

Ther. Well, my friend, whatever guilt I or others have contracted, *flattery*, I dare be positive, is none of yours. Human nature has received no heightening or adulatory touches from your pencil. You have pourtrayed her *foolish*, and *beastly*, and every thing bad but *devilish*.

Asp. And this, even this abomination I must not secrete, I dare not except.—*Envy* is a devilish disposition. It subsists no where, but in damned spirits, and fallen souls. Yet, infernal as it is, it has been found in persons of the most exalted character. The magnanimous *Joshua* felt its cancerous tooth ‡. The disciples of the blessed *JESUS* were soured with its malignant leaven ‖. An apostle declares, that *the spirit which dwelleth in us lusteth to envy* ⸸; is impetuously prone to that detestable temper.

Lying

* Jer. ii. 32.

† This, I think, suggests an unanswerable confutation of that specious argument, frequently used in behalf of some *fashionable* but *dissolute* diversions. "They are interspersed," say their admirers, "with sentiments of virtue, and maxims "of morality."—Should we admit the truth of this plea; yet the depraved disposition of mankind is pretty sure to drop the morality, and carry away the ribaldry.

‡ Numb. xi. 29. ‖ Matth. xx. 24. ⸸ Jam. iv. 5.

Lying is confeſſedly a diabolical practice; yet how unaccountably forward are our children to utter falſehood? As ſoon as they are born, they go aſtray; and as ſoon as they ſpeak, they ſpeak lies.—I ſaid *unaccountably*. But I recall the expreſſion. The cauſe is evident. They have loſt the image of the GOD of truth; and are become like that apoſtate ſpirit, who *is a liar, and the father of it* *.

What think you of *malice*, of *hate*, and *revenge*? Are they not each a ſpecies of murder, and the ſeed of the old ſerpent? Unleſs, therefore, we are entirely free from all theſe helliſh emotions, we muſt, *we muſt* acknowledge, that the prince of this world † has his party within us. May the almighty hand of our GOD extirpate and ſubdue it, day by day!

You tell me, I am *no flatterer*.—Should a perſon who profeſſes himſelf the friend of his fellow-creatures, ſooth them into a *falſe* peace? ſhould he bolſter them up in a *groundleſs* conceit of their excellency, when they really are no better than "an unclean thing?"—Shall the ſurgeon aſſure his patient, "All is well;" even when the mortification has taken place, and the gangrene is ſpreading? This were to refine the firſt out of all benevolence, and to flatter the laſt into his grave.

A diſputant of leſs complaiſance than my *Theron*, would probably aſk, with a contemptuous ſneer, "Have you then been drawing your own picture?"—To whom I would reply, with confuſion and ſorrow, "I have:" alledging this only, to moderate *my confuſion*, that I am daily ſeeking, by prayer and watchfulneſs, more and more *to put off this old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts* ‡. And, to alleviate *my ſorrow*, I am endeavouring continually to remember, that, however unworthy I am, however vile I may have been, my adored REDEEMER's righteouſneſs is perfect; and in *this* righteouſneſs every believer is to make his boaſt.

Ther-

* John viii. 44. † John xiv. 30. ‡ Eph. iv. 22.

Ther. So then man is blind in his understanding; perverse in his will; disorderly in his affections; influenced by dispositions, which are partly brutal, and partly diabolical.—I have often heard you extol, in terms of high admiration, the virtue of *humility*. You have lavished all the riches of eloquence, when haranguing on poverty of spirit. If *such* be the condition of mankind, they have infinite cause to be poor in spirit. They must, therefore, have *one* excellency left; and, according to your own account, a very distinguishing one.

Asp. Scarce any thing displays, in a more glaring light, the extreme depravity of man, than his strong propensity to *pride*, notwithstanding so much vileness, and so many deformities.—Should the noisome leper admire the *beauty* of his complexion, or the impotent paralytic glory in the *strength* of his sinews; would they not be mistaken, even to a degree of sottishness and frenzy? Yet for man, fallen man, who has lost his original righteousness, which was the true ornament of his nature; who is become subject to base and sordid lusts, or, as the apostle speaks, *is earthly and sensual*,—for *him* to be proud, is still more absurdly wicked. And since this is the case, I cannot acquit him from the last and heaviest article of the sacred writer's charge; I have a fresh and more convincing proof, that we do him no wrong, when we call his nature, his disposition, his *wisdom*,—*devilish* *.

Ther. Why do you reckon pride an universally-prevailing corruption? I see no ground for such a dishonourable suspicion. I hope, I *myself* am an instance to the contrary. To unguarded sallies of passion, to several other faults, I confess myself subject; but cannot think, that I am proud.

Asp. Ah! *Theron*, if you was not proud, you would not be passionate. Unreasonable anger always proceeds

* Jam. iii. 15.

ceeds from an overweening opinion of our own worth.—One who, besides his acquired knowledge of human nature, had the supernatural gift of discerning spirits, is observed to join *humility and meekness* *: intimating, that they are amiable twins; and where one exists the other cannot be absent.—Always consistent with himself, he links together the opposite vices, *heady and high-minded* †: not obscurely hinting, that those who are easily provoked, are certainly proud.—Shall I add, without offence? If we fancy our minds to be clear from the weeds of vanity, and our thoughts free from the workings of self-admiration; it is a most pregnant symptom, that we are *over-run* with the former, *abandoned* to the latter, and *blinded* by both.

Pride was the first sin, that found entrance into our nature; and it is, perhaps, the last that will be expelled.—What are all our afflictions, but a remedy provided for this inveterate disease? intended to *hide pride* ‡ *from man*. What is the institution of the gospel, but a battery erected against this strong-hold of Satan? ordained to *cast down every high imagination* ‖.—Though that remedy is often applied, though this battery is continually playing; yet the peccant humour is not entirely purged off, nor the elatement of spirit totally subdued, till *mortality is swallowed up of life*.

Pride is the sin which most easily besets us. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean* ‡ from this iniquity? it defiles our duties, and intermingles itself with our very virtues. It starts up, I know not how, in our most solemn hours, and our most sacred employs.—The good *Hezekiah*, whose prayers were more powerful than all the forces of *Sennacherib*, was not proof against the wiles of this subtil sorceress ⁂. Even the great apostle, who had been caught up into the third heavens, was in danger of being *puffed up* with

* Eph. iv. 2. † 2 Tim. iii. 4. ‡ Job xxxiii. 17.
‖ 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. ‡ Prov. xx. 9. 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

with pride: in such great danger, that it was necessary to put a lancet into the gathering tumour: or as he himself expresses it, to fix a *thorn in his flesh** and permit the *messenger of Satan to buffet him.*

How pathetically is this corruption lamented, and how truly described by "a sweet singer of our *Israel!*"

But pride, that busy sin,
Spoils all that I perform.
Curs'd pride! that creeps securely in
And swells a haughty worm.

Thy glories I abate,
Or praise thee with design;
Part of thy favours I forget,
Or think the merit mine.

The very songs I frame,
Are faithless to thy cause;
And steal the honours of thy name,
To build their own applause†.

Ther. Now, I presume, you have given the last touches to your distorted portrait.

Asp. There are other disagreeable and shocking features. But those I shall cast into shades, or hide under a veil. One particular you must allow me to add, which, like a sullen air in the countenance, throws aggravated horror over the whole. I mean, an inclination to be *fond of* our *slavery.*

In other instances, *the captive exile hasteth to be loosed*‡. But here we prefer bondage to freedom, and are loath to leave our prison. Of this, our backwardness to *self-examination*, is both a consequence and a proof. Self-examination, under the agency of the SPIRIT,

* 2 Cor. xii. 7. † WATTS's *Hor. Lyr.* ‡ Is. li. 14.

SPIRIT, would open a window in our dungeon; would ſhew us our wretched condition, and teach us to ſigh for deliverance.—Why have we ſuch a diſlike of *reproof?* Becauſe we hug our chains, and chuſe darkneſs rather than light. Reproof is more grating than the harſheſt diſcord, though it tends to diſſolve the inchantment, and reſcue us from the tyranny of ſin. While *flattery*, which abets the deluſion, and ſtrengthens the ſpell, is muſic to our ears.—Is not our *reaſon* which ſhould arraign and condemn every irregularity, forward to invent excuſes, and to ſpare the favourite folly? Reaſon, which ſhould unſheath the *dagger*, ſuperinduces the *maſk*; and, inſtead of ſtriking at the heart of our vices, ſcreens them under the cover of ſome plauſible names. A wicked habit is called a human infirmity; inſnaring diverſions paſs for innocent amuſements; a revengeful diſpoſition is termed ſpirit, gallantry, and honour. Thus our reaſon (if, when ſo egregiouſly perverted, it deſerves the name) is ingenious to obſtruct our recovery; and *rivets* on the ſhackles which our paſſions have formed *.

This the eternal WISDOM foreſaw, and therefore uttered that tender expoſtulation; *How long ye ſimple ones will ye* love *ſimplicity*, *and ſcorners* delight *in their ſcorning*, *and fools* hate *knowledge?* Even the ineſtimably-precious knowledge of an all-atoning and completely-juſtifying SAVIOUR; who preaches, who has purchaſed, and who works deliverance,—preaches in his word, has purchaſed by his blood, and works by his SPIRIT, deliverance for the captives,—

* Perhaps, this is what our LORD means, when, developing the human heart, and diſcovering its latent enormities, he cloſes the dark account with αφροσυνη, *fooliſhneſs*: implying that *ſtupidity*, which has no ſenſe of its miſery; that *perverſeneſs*, which has no inclination for a recovery: both which render all the other evils far more inveterate, *Mark* vii. 22.

tices,—the wretched captives of ignorance, sin, and death.

This I take to be the most *flagrant* and *deplorable* effect of human depravity,—our aversion to the doctrine, the privileges, the grace of the gospel. Beware, dear *Theron*, lest you prove my point by—shall I speak it? would you suspect it?—your own practice. Zealous as I am for my tenets, I should be sorry, extremely sorrow, to have *such* a demonstration of their truth.

Ther. You are highly obliging, *Aspasio*, to single *me* out for your evidence. Yet why should the honour be appropriated to myself? It belongs, upon the foot of the preceding calculation, not to your friend only, but to the whole species.—If you was aiming at none but the licentious and abandoned, you would have none to oppose you, but persons of that character. Your arrows of satire would then be rightly levelled, and might be serviceable to mankind. Whereas to put *all* in the black list, to mark *all* with the villain's brand; this can never be *Christian* charity, this is unsufferable censoriousness.

Asp. Let me beseech you, *Theron*, not to misapprehend my design. I speak not as a malevolent satirist, but would imitate the faithful physician. I am opening the sore, that it may admit the healing balm: and should I perform the operation with an *invenomed* instrument? My soul abhors the thought.—I must entreat you likewise to remember the distinction between a state of nature and a state of grace. We are all naturally evil. Such we should for ever continue, did not a *supernatural* power intervene; making some to differ, both from their original selves, and from the generality of their neighbours.—Are they refined in their temper, and reformed in their life? I grant it. But then it is the influence of the sanctifying SPIRIT, which purges away their dross, yet not without leaving *some alloy*.

Ther.

Ther. Here, *Aſpaſio*, you certainly ſtrain the bow, till it breaks. Since ſcripture itſelf celebrates ſome perſons, as abſolutely perfect.—What ſays *Moſes*, the inſpired hiſtorian? *Noah was perfect in his generation* *.—What ſays the GOD of *Moſes*, who can neither deceive nor be deceived? *Job was a perfect man and an upright* †.—Conſequently, *their* nature muſt be entirely cleanſed from this hereditary defilement; and *their* character confutes your derogatory repreſentations of mankind.

Aſp. Thoſe eminent ſaints were perfect; that is, they were *ſanctified throughout;* ſanctified in all their faculties; no one grace of religion was lacking. As in the new-born infant, there is a human creature complete; no conſtituent part of the vital frame is wanting; though each is tender, all are very feeble, and none arrived at the full ſize.

They were *upright*. This word ſeems to be explanatory of the preceding; and ſignifies an unfeigned deſire, joined with hearty endeavour, to obey the whole will of GOD; excluding, not all defect, but all *reigning* hypocriſy, and *wilful* remiſſneſs.—The interpretation, thus limited, is of a piece with their conduct. If ſtretched to a higher pitch, it is evidently inconſiſtent with the narrative of their lives.

Pray, what was your motive for decorating the ſilvan retirement (which ſheltered us yeſterday) with the ſtatue of *Elijah?*

Ther. Becauſe I thought, his ſolitary life, and gloomy temper, ſuited that ſequeſtered bower: becauſe the memorable adventure, there repreſented, is, with me, a favourite portion of ſacred hiſtory.

Are we pleaſed with ſpirited and delicate *raillery?* Nothing exceeds his pungent ſarcaſm on the ſtupid and deſpicable dupes of idolatry. Every ſentence is keen as a razor, and pointed as a dagger, yet wears the appearance

* Gen. vi. 9. † Job i. 2.

pearance of the moſt courtly complaiſance. We may truly ſay, in the beautiful language of the Pſalmiſt, *His words are ſmoother than oil, and yet be they very ſwords* *.

Are we delighted with inſtances of *magnanimity?* A ſingle prophet, unſupported by any human aid, maintains the cauſe of truth, againſt the king, his grandees, and hundreds of the apoſtate prieſts. He ventures to ſtake all his credit, to riſk his very life, and (what was dearer to him than perſonal credit, or bodily life) the honour of the true GOD, and intereſts of his holy religion,—to riſk all on the *immediate* interpoſition of a moſt ſurpriſing miracle.

Do we admire the triumphs of *faith?* His faith was, in a manner, omnipotent. He prays, and *torrents* of *fire* deſcend from the ſky, to devour his adverſaries †.—He prays again, and the ſluices of heaven are *ſhut:* there is neither dew nor rain for ſeveral years ‡.—A third time he prays, and the windows from on high are *opened;* abundance of ſhowers water the earth ‖.—On another occaſion he preſents his ſupplications, and GOD makes his feet like harts feet, inſomuch that an aged prophet *outruns* the royal chariot †.

Aſp. I commend your taſte, *Theron;* and am particularly pleaſed with the reaſons of your choice.—But do not you remember, that even the wonder-working *Tiſhbite* failed in his reſignation, and failed in his faith? Eminent as he was for mortification, he gave way to *unreaſonable* diſcontent; and, though a champion for the living GOD, he yielded to *unbelieving* fear §.—

The

* 1 *Kings* xviii. 27. And it came to paſs at noon, that *Elijah* mocked them, and ſaid, *Cry aloud; for he is a God. Either he is talking, or he is purſuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he ſleepeth, and muſt be awaked.*

† 2 Kings i. 10. ‡ 1 Kings xvii. 1. ‖ Jam. v. 17, 18. † 1 Kings xviii. 46.

§ *Elias,* or rather *Elijah, was a man ſubject to like paſſions as*

we

The man Moſes was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth * : yet he, even he was provoked in his ſpirit, and ſpoke unadviſedly with his lips †.—Was not *Peter* the hero among our LORD's followers? Yet he trembles, more than trembles, at the ſhaking of a leaf; he denies his divine MASTER, ſcared by the voice of a woman.

Look where-ever we will, we find proofs of human depravity; reigning *uncontrolled* in ſome, making frequent *inſurrection* in all. It is written on our own hearts, by the pen of experience; the finger of obſervation points it out, in the practice of others;—even in the practice of *thoſe* who have been ſaints of the firſt rank, and of the higheſt endowments. Yet they were defective;—defective too, in *that very* quality, which was their diſtinguiſhing gift, in which they particularly excelled.

Ther. While we are talking, the day has inſenſibly ſtole itſelf away, and left us ſurrounded with *twilight*: which is a ſort of luſtre intermingled with darkneſs; no part wholly lucid; no part wholly obſcure.—An emblem, according to your repreſentation, of the renewed ſoul, and its imperfect holineſs.

Aſp. A very juſt one.—Even where the goſpel ſhines, ſtill there is an *incurrent* gloom of corruption. Ignorance mixes itſelf with our knowledge. Unbelief cleaves to our faith. Nor is our purity free from all contamination.

we are, Jam. v. 17. Upon which paſſage, an eminent commentator makes the following remark: "This probably is ſaid, "with reſpect to his *fear* and *diſcontent*, manifeſted 1 *Kings* "xix. 3, 4."—ομοιοπαθης muſt, I think, imply a ſtate liable to the *irregular* workings of paſſion; not free from the *ſinful* infirmities of nature. Otherwiſe, it is an inſtance foreign to the purpoſe; does by no means anſwer the end deſigned; which is to encourage the heart, and ſtrengthen the faith, even of *frail*, *corrupt*, *offending* creatures. See *ver.* 16.

* Numb. xii. 3. † Pſal. cvi. 33.

contamination.—The prophet *Zechariah*, foretelling the eſtabliſhment of the goſpel-kingdom, and deſcribing the ſtate of its ſpiritual ſubjects, ſays, *It ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the light ſhall not be clear nor dark* *. This, as to its *literal* ſenſe, we now ſee exemplified in the circumambient atmoſphere. With regard to its *ſpiritual* meaning, every true believer feels it accompliſhed in his own breaſt.

Ther. While you are ſo vehement in decrying all human attainments, conſider, *Aſpaſio*, whether you do not *check* and *diſpirit* us in the purſuit of exalted virtue.

Aſp. I ſuppoſe, you never expected to be ſuch an adept in geometry as *Archimedes*, nor ſo profound an aſtronomer as *Newton;* yet this did not check your application to the ſtudy of mathematics, or the contemplation of the heavens.—Your brother, the merchant, I preſume, has no proſpect of amaſſing the wealth of a *Cræſus*, or the immenſe treaſures of a *Kouli-Kan;* yet this does not diſpirit him in proſecuting the buſineſs, which brings him both opulence and honour.

However, *Theron*, ſo long as you deny the imputation of *CHRIST*'s righteouſneſs, I muſt acknowledge, you act a conſiſtent part, in being zealous for the perfection of perſonal obedience. You ought either to *acquire* the one, or to *accept* the other. Therefore I ſhall produce no more arguments for your diſcouragement; but ſhall compriſe the whole of my anſwer, in the motto to an *Iriſh* nobleman's arms, TRY. Or, if this be too conciſe, I will ſubjoin, with a very little alteration, the words of a king; "When you "have attained what you purſue, *bring me word again*, "*that I may go and poſſeſs it alſo* †.

Ther.

* *Zech.* xvi. 6. 1 *Cor.* xiii. 9. *For we know in part.* Perhaps this declaration of the apoſtle may be a key to the prophet's meaning. However, it is a ſufficient confirmation of *Aſpaſio*'s ſentiment. † Matth. ii. 8.

Ther. According to your account, the moſt advanced and eſtabliſhed Chriſtians are but like a company of *invalids*. Does not this extremely derogate from the honour of our LORD, conſidered as the *Phyſician* of ſouls? It ſeems to make a mere nothing of ſanctification, and would ſwallow up *CHRIST* the King in *CHRIST* the Prieſt.

Aſp. Invalids they are *; and ſuch will continue, till they are diſmiſſed from this great infirmary, and admitted into that holy, happy, bleſſed world; where *the inhabitant ſhall no more ſay, I am* either in ſoul or in body *ſick* †.

If the cure was *never* to be completed, this doubtleſs would be diſhonourable to our almighty PHYSICIAN. But the ſpiritual recovery, begun on earth, and advancing through time, will be perfected in heaven, and prolonged to eternity.—Does this make a mere nothing of ſanctification? No, but it makes room for a continual *progreſs*, and affords cauſe for continual *humiliation*.

* Do not the *beſt* of men lament their ignorance of the divine perfections, their ſlowneſs of heart to believe the divine promiſes, and the languor of their gratitude for inеſtimable, for innumerable gifts of the divine goodneſs?—Do they not frequently feel deadneſs in their devotions, diſorder in their affections, and various other relics of the original leaven?—Do they not often complain, in the language of the apoſtle, *When I would do good, evil is preſent with me?* and ſay with the earlieſt *Chriſtians, We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened:* burdened, not ſo much with affliction; thoſe heroes in *Chriſtianity* had learned, to *rejoice in tribulation:* but burdened with a ſenſe of their ſpiritual infirmities, and with the workings of their inbred corruption; which, to a tender and lively believer, are the *heavieſt* of croſſes, and the *moſt galling* of loads.—Nay, do not the heirs of glory *waſh their very robes*, even their faireſt deeds, and their brighteſt graces, *in the blood of the LAMB?* which, if they were free from ſpot, and void of impurity, need not be *made white* in this ſacred fountain. See 2 *Cor.* v. 4. *Rev.* vii. 4.

† Iſ. xxxiii. 24.

humiliation. It reserves a most exalted prerogative for the heavenly state and beatific vision; and perpetually reminds us of a most important truth, That our present blessedness consists, not in being *free* from *all* sin, but in having *no* sin *imputed* to us *.

This imperfection of our obedience, instead of confounding, maintains a proper *distinction* between *CHRIST* the King, and *CHRIST* the Priest. Whereas, if we were perfect in piety, the priestly office, with regard to us, would be superseded. What need of an intercessor to recommend our prayers? what occasion for an high priest to *bear the iniquity of our holy things* †? if some taint of the original leaven did not pollute our best services?

Neither does this detract from the wisdom, from the goodness, or from the power of *CHRIST*. It rather administers to the advantageous display of all these divine attributes.—Of his *wisdom*, in conducting the affairs of his church with such exact propriety, that the righteousness of faith may have its due honour, and the sanctification of the SPIRIT its proper esteem.—Of his *goodness*, in carrying on the work of grace, amidst so much infirmity, and so many corruptions; and in crowning, with consummate happiness, such frail undeserving creatures.—Of his *power*, in extracting a variety of benefits even from—

Ther. Benefits, Aspasio!—Can any thing beneficial proceed from an evil, which, according to your own representation, is so incorrigibly malignant?

Asp. It will tend to make us *lowly in our own eyes*. When we remember, that by nature we are altogether become abominable; that the remains of natural depravity still adhere to our minds; how must such a view of ourselves cover us with shame, and lay us low

* Psal. xxxii. 2.

† *Exod.* xxviii. 38. *Id est, expiare peccata, quibus sanctissimæ cæteroquin actiones nostræ inquinatæ sunt.* WITS. de Oecon.

low in abasement! *Less than the least of all thy mercies* *, will be the language of such a one's very soul.

It will dispose us to *compassionate others*. How can we take a brother by the throat, and require faultless perfection in his behaviour, when we ourselves in many things offend, in all things fall short? Every such consideration rebukes, what I may call spiritual unmercifulness; it pleads for tenderness and forbearance to our fellow-creatures; it is a monitor within, and whispers that affecting remonstrance, *Oughtest not thou to have compassion upon thy fellow-servant, since thy almighty* LORD *hath* such renewed, such unwearied *pity on thee* †?

It will teach us to admire the *riches* of *grace*. Shall fallen creatures, that are taken from the very dunghills of sin, and rescued from a hell of inward iniquity, —shall *they*, notwithstanding their deplorable depravity, and innumerable deficiencies,—shall *they* be admitted into the bosom of eternal love? *they* be exalted to the thrones of glory, and numbered with the princes of heaven? This is grace, transcendently rich, and divinely free indeed!

Will it not *reconcile* us to the approach of *death*? This, methinks, like wormwood on the nipple, or gall in the cup, must tend to wean us from the world. How can we be enamoured with such a land of darkness, and such a vale of tears? Or why should we covet, when providence gives the signal for our departure, to prolong our abode in these territories of *disorder*?—Surely this must incline us to leave them, every day, more and more in our affections; and at last, to leave them, without any reluctance, by final dissolution; leave them, for that better country, where our personal righteousness will no longer be defective, like the *waning* moon; but shine forth with consummate lustre, like the *meridian* sun, in the kingdom of our FATHER.

* Gen. xxxii. 10. † Matth. xviii. 33.

It will *endear* the bleſſed *JESUS* in *every* capacity; as the ſtings of the fiery flying ſerpents, and the dearth of the waſte howling wilderneſs, endeared to the *Iſraelites* both their miraculous antidote, and their bread from heaven.—They who believe this truth, muſt ſee their inexpreſſible and inceſſant need of *CHRIST*'s Spirit. The proteſtation of *Moſes*, on a particular occaſion, will be the daily, the hourly breathing of their ſouls; *Carry us not up hence, unleſs thy preſence*, thy SPIRIT *go with us* *. For without this aid, we can diſcharge no duty aright, nor ſucceſsfully reſiſt any temptation.—They will be exceedingly cautious, not to *grieve* † that ſacred gueſt, leſt he depart from them, and abandon them to the power of their lurking corruptions: knowing, that if *he* abandon them, when ſuch foes are within, and ſo many ſnares without, their caſe will be worſe than *Samſon*'s, when his locks were ſhaven, and the *Philiſtines* all around him.

How highly will ſuch perſons value the *blood* of the covenant, and the *interceſſion* of their great HIGH-PRIEST!—They will no more preſume to enter into the preſence of the moſt high GOD, without a fiducial reliance upon the atoning and interceding *SAVIOUR;* than the ſons of *Jacob* would have ventured to appear before the viceroy of *Egypt*, without the company of their younger brother ‡. In all, in all their intercourſe with heaven, the great PROPITIATION will be their plea, and the great ADVOCATE their confidence.—The impotent man waited at the pool of *Bethesda*, and the *Syrian* general dipped ſeven times in *Jordan*. Theſe perſons will not only *wait*, but *live* by the fountain opened for ſin and uncleanneſs ||. They will waſh in the ſacred ſanctifying ſtream, not *ſeven* times only, but *ſeventy times* ſeven.

And when ſuch ſentiments poſſeſs the mind, how dear?

* Exod. xxxiii. 15.
† Eph. iv. 30.
‡ Gen. xliii. 5.
|| Zech. xiii. 1.

dear? O how *dear* and *desirable* will our LORD's obedience be!—I called some time ago, our own works *worm-eaten things;* and must not these corruptions, if they remain ever so little in the heart, tarnish our graces, and debase our duties? Must they not be depretiatory to all our accomplishments; and too much like *corroding vermin*, in the substance of our timber or at the core of our fruits?—Should we not then renounce, utterly renounce these tarnished, worm-eaten things? and rely, wholly rely, for everlasting acceptance, on our divine HIGH PRIEST? who, in his mediatorial works, as well as in his wonderful person, is altogether *light* and *perfection*;* and neither in him nor in them, is there any deficiency or any darkness at all.

Excuse me, *Theron;* I fear, I have been preaching. The importance of the text must form my apology. It is an *introduction*, not to the records of history, or the transactions of philosophy, but to the riches of *CHRIST*.

Ther. If my *Aspasio* has been preaching, I can assure him for his comfort, that his audience has been very attentive; and though the sermon was somewhat copious, the hearer neither slept nor gaped.—However, I should be glad to have the whole reviewed, and summed up; that, if it has been large as the pyramid,

* *Light and perfection*—This is the meaning of that mysterious ornament, which, in the grand officiating robes of the *Jewish* high priest, was annexed to the breast-plate, and styled *Urim* and *Thummim*. Only the *Hebrew* words are in the plural number, and denote *every degree* of illumination, and *all kinds* of perfection.—Does not this very significantly teach sinners, whence to seek their wisdom, and where to look for their perfection? There never was, in all ages, more than one *Urim* and *Thummim;* and only one person, in each generation, was appointed to wear it. And who is there, in all worlds, that can give us heavenly knowledge, but the SPIRIT of *CHRIST?* What is there, in ourselves or all creatures, that can present us unblameable before GOD, but the obedience of *CHRIST?*

ramid, it may, like the pyramid, terminate in a *point*.

Asp. This then is the ſtate of our nature.—The image of the CREATOR is loſt; blindneſs is in the underſtanding; diſorder in all the affections.—In the will, enmity againſt GOD, the ſovereign good; inability to all that is ſpiritual and heavenly; with a propenſity to whatever is ſordid and earthly.—The whole ſoul is deformed, diſtempered, rebellious.—And ſhall ſuch a creature lay claim to thoſe amiable and ſacred endowments, which may be a *proper recommendation* to infinite holineſs?—Is ſuch a creature qualified to perform thoſe righteous acts, which may approve themſelves to the *demand* of GOD's law, and to the *inflexibility* of his juſtice?

Should he conceive the vain hope, or make the vainer attempt, I would now addreſs him, as *Jehoaſh* formerly anſwered *Amaziah*.—*Amaziah* king of *Judah*, elated with the little victories he had obtained over the *Edomites*, began to fancy himſelf invincible. Prompted by this fooliſh imagination, he challenges *Jehoaſh* king of *Iſrael*, to meet him in a pitched battle; and receives this ironical apologue, by way of reply;—which for gallantry of ſpirit and delicacy of wit, for poignancy of ſatire and propriety of application, has ſeldom been equalled, perhaps never exceeded:—*The thiſtle that was in Lebanon, ſent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, ſaying, Give thy daughter to my ſon to wife: and there paſſed by a wild beaſt that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thiſtle**. What are we,—when we offer to eſtabliſh our own righteouſneſs, or preſume to juſtify ourſelves before the moſt high GOD,—but *deſpicable thiſtles*, that fancy themſelves *ſtately cedars*? And is not every temptation, is not each corruption, a wild beaſt of the deſert, which will trample on the impotent boaſter, and tread his haughty pretenſions in the duſt?

* 2 Kings xiv. 9.

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